Fifty Animated Years

THE NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES

VOLUME TWO

1975 - 2025

Brief Note for this Collection

Well, as they say, *"That was quick!"*

When the ASIFA Central chapter was organized in 1975, it was a Chicago-centric gang of enthusiasts. It now has membership reaching from Oregon to Pennsylvania; and thanks to the internet, our zoom "coffee break" gatherings attract visitors from across Europe, Asia, and India.

What emerges in these pages is a rich history of animation lore, community dispatches, and the small miracles of frame-by-frame life. From festivals and archival discoveries to the quiet alchemy of drawings and motion studies, these newsletters reflect a love of animation for anyone who believes that a ritually-destroyed retreat cake may truly enhance anyone's life.

Thanks for the memories, everyone at ASIFA Central.

Yr hmbl typst and editor

Jim Middleton
ASIFA Central

SUMMER 2000

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

SUMMER 2000

Animation Gets Flashy

by Randy Rockafellow

Delivery of animation over the web in large part is all about smaller file sizes. With advent of the Flash File format (.swf); this has given animation the ability to reach the sweet spot in overall file size by using vector graphics. Plus Flash can be used to create interactive graphics like a graphical interface, or choose your adventure style movie.

My intial experience with creating flash was brief. I had toyed around with Macromedia Flash 4.0, but hadn't pursued it any further. After seeing Stan Lee's "7th Portal", a Flash syle animated comic book; I began to look at flash a lot more seriously. I decided to spend some time surfing the web for other web sites creating high quality flash animations that would further inspire me. Read my listed net resources for flash animation sites to visit.

The flash animation that I quickly created resulted from an exchange of project ideas from ASIFA/Central member T.L. Champion. Her idea was penid in a comic book style and because of "7th Portal" I saw immediate flash potential. With Flash you can surplant text bubbles in favor of actual sound effects and dialogue. So speaking into my 8mm camcorder I recorded the dialogue. Then digitized that into laptop using my input audio jacks and the audio recorder program that comes with windows 98. The next steps were to import the .wav or .mp3 audio file into Flash 4.0 and start making my drawings. After adjusting my images along the timeline I published a Flash file that was ready to be dropped into an html page. See my resulting animation at www.asifa.org/animate.

As of this writing there are a number of tools to create your own flash animation files. To create and string togeher multilple flash files youíll want to get either Macromedia's Flash 4.0 or the recently released Adobe Livemotion. Flash 4.0 is more powerful in its ability to create interactive experiences while Livemotion uses Adobe's familiar toolset to get users up and running quickly. They both work from the principle of drawing a series of two dimensional shapes or otherwise known as vector graphics. Flash files can also be created using a 3D animation program. A plug-in called Illustrate 4.1 allows 3D Studio max users render their animation out to a flash file. Two stand-alone 3D products are Vecta3D and Swift3D. Read more in-depth on the capabilities of these programs from their respective websites listed in the net resources below.

Net Resources:
StanLee.net
AtomFilms.com
Icebox.com
Shockwave.com
Nosepilot.com
Joecartoon.com
Wildbrain.com

World Internet Animation Celebration winners:
http://wiac.shockwave.com/pro

Flashy (Rockafellow) continued on 3

Report From ZAGREB

by Deanna Morse

This was the first time I attended the ZAGREB International Film Festival, although I had a film screened there several years ago. This was their 14th festival, held in Zagreb, Croatia, June 21 through 25th. From my experience now, I have two pieces of advice for animators: 1) Enter your films in the Zagreb festival. 2) Go to Zagreb for the festival.

Prior to going, I had some concern about traveling to Croatia. On the American news, all we hear about are the bombing and the political difficulties. But, as a tourist in the Northern region of Croatia, this was not my experience at all.

I traveled with a friend, and we vacationed on the Istrian Peninsula for a week prior to the festival. We rented a car, and drove from the airport to the Adriatic sea, considered by many to be the most beautiful coastline in the world. Shortly after we picked this destination, the NY Times Travel Section touted "Get there before the crowds return!," considering the area has long been known to the Italian and German tourists. We stayed near the resort town of Rovinj, an egg shaped fortress island which is now connected to the mainland. Walking through the narrow cobblestone meandering streets, I felt like I had stepped back centuries in time. Of course, there are always the

Zagreb (Morse) continued on 3

Inside this Issue

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Letter from the President
and much more ...

Letter from the Editor *by Jennifer Eldred*

Starting with the Fall edition I will be featuring a Members Spotlight section in the newsletter each quarter. In it I would like to include short tid-bits on all ASIFA/Central members. So drop me a line and let me know what you've been up to. Have you recently completed a project, schooling, or been given recognition for your work? If so, or if you have other news, please submit it to me at eldredj@usa.net. Contributing to such columns helps all members stay connected inbetween our annual conference, and I want to stress that ASIFA/Central is here for you year round. Plus personally, I want to know who you are, what you've been up to and how ASIFA/Central can feature you and your talent to our animation community.

If you would like to contribute to the column, please find the deadline for submition below.

Thanks to all the contributing writers who help keep ASIFA/Central members informed and connected throughout the year.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Jennifer Eldred

The deadline for the Fall Edition of Frame by Frame is October 1, 2000.

Letter from the President *by Randy Rockafellow*

It's the middle of the summer. A summer that has already seen plenty of animation films hit the big screen. I've seen *Dinosaur*, *Chicken Run*, and *Titan A.E.* Before the summers out I'll probably see the *X-men the Movie*. If you only see one animated film this summer see *Dinosaur*. Where *Phantom Menace* was all about eye-popping animation and effects; *Dinosaur* is all about the subtle less noticeable animated details. Which as an animator you watch them in pure delight and amazement.

For this newsletter I wrote about animation on a slightly smaller screen. I'm talking about animating for web using Flash. Read my article to learn about Flash sites of interest and the tools to start creating your own Flash animations.

On the what has your president done lately for ASIFA/Central front; I've secured our Domain name registration for the next five years. Wahoo! So ASIFA/Central will stay right at ASIFA.ORG.

Til next newsletter,

Randall Rockafellow

President, ASIFA/Central
rrockafellow2@juno.com

New Free Collectors News & Service Site

www.antiquecast.com is a new free collectors news and service site designed to help collectors and dealers keep abreast of the latest market trends in their field of interest.

Check out the real time price guide and enter the Flintstone's Animation Cel Contest on the site.

If you have a web page, add your free link to "Antique Row". Using the following html code:
href="http://www.antiquecast.com/index.html">antiquecast.com

Rei Kacinskas
rei@antiquecast.com

ASIFA/Central Mission Statement
ASIFA: Association Internationale du Film d' Animation

The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. – adopted 3/92

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E-mail: asifa@asifa.org

ASIFA/Central Conference:
April 27 - April 29, 2001

To contribute or volunteer contact:
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E-mail: rrockafellow2@juno.com

To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

Flashy (Rockafellow) continued from 1

mo/wiac/
http://wiac.shockwave.com/promo/wiac/

Vecta3D
http://www.vecta3d.com

Macromedia Flash
http://www.macromedia.com/software/flash/

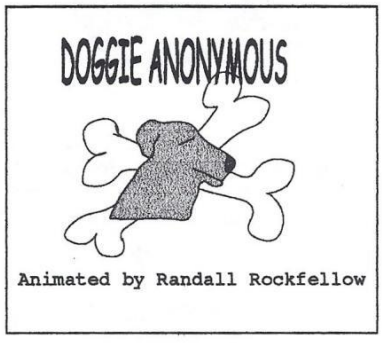
Adobe Livemotion
http://www.adobe.com/products/livemotion/main.html

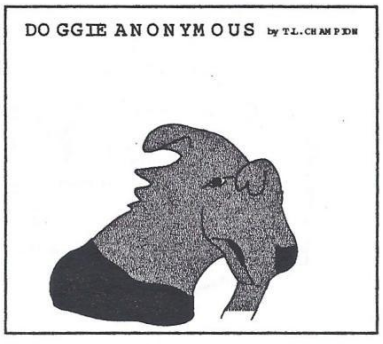
Electric Rain Swift 3D
http://www.swift3d.com/

ATOMFILMS Flash Beat Finalists
http://www.atomfilms.com/default.asp

Members email your flash animation creations to asifa@asifa.org and it will get showcased on our website.

Randy has been busy freelancing his animation talents. Before too long he'll be once again teaching a couple of intro to 3D animation courses at Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, MI. Contact him at rrockafellow2@juno.com





Zagrab (Morse) continued from 1

always the contemporary contrasts. For instance, many of the aged orange tiled roofs were decorated with satellite dishes. Nearby, in Pula, was a working amphitheater built in the first century, one of the best preserved in Europe. (Our guidebook described how the walls had witnessed all manners of horrors, from gladiator matches to Bryan Adams concerts...) The food was great: Italian inspired, with regional dishes. Traveling was easy. People were friendly. I heartily recommend this trip, and will be glad to offer more information to others considering this journey.

But, on to the Festival! Zagreb, considered the ideal city of the 19th century, is a perfect location for this festival. Full of museums, beautiful architecture, cultural landmarks, and a great old cemetery, it is laid out on a grid and is easy to negotiate. The festival hotel, The Intercontinental,was posh, and comfortable, with a lavish breakfast buffet and a swimming pool.

It was far more pricey than the rest of Croatia, but since the festival offers free housing and meals for filmmakers whose films are in competition, it was a luxurious gift to the filmmakers.

The festival was held in a modern auditorium which was five tram stops, or about a twenty minute walk, from the hotel. The big concert hall was nearly full, and the audience was lively and receptive. The programs started on time, and the projection was generally good, except that the video images were not as large as the film projection. There were competition programs, panorama showings, a special retrospective tribute and exhibit of Jan Svankmajer, and retrospectives of Indian, Israeli, Spanish and Croatian animated films. There was also a screening of films from the ASIFA Archives, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of ASIFA.

There was a filmmakers' picnic mid-week, which gave a chance for the filmmakers to connect with each other, eat some local fare, and do a little horseback riding. Unfortunately, it was miserably and unseasonably hot for the first few days of the festival, including the picnic day. But then the weather shifted, and it was back to normal for June. Later in the week, I spent several hours just walking around the city, enjoying the weather and appreciating the architecture. At each corner, there were surprising elements: the public buildings were impressive, with columns, gargoyles, statues, and on another block, there were beautiful Art Nouveau tiled houses. It was a fabulous city to explore on foot.

There were 586 films entered in this years' festival. Of that number, 55 were selected for Competition, and 37 for the Panorama. In my opinion, to have one film in ten selected - these are not bad odds. Watch for the Zagreb 2002 deadline. And if your film is selected, or even if it isn't, consider attending this important and longstanding European Animation festival!

The ZAGREB 2000 winners:
Grand Prize:
When the Day Breaks, Wendy Tilby and Amanda-Forbis, Canada
Best in Categories:
Festival/La Sagra, Roberto Catani, Italy
Whatever It Takes, Joanna Quinn, USA
At The End of the Earth, Konstantin Bronzit, France
Village of Idiots, Eugene Fedorenko and Rose Newlove, Canada
The Old Man and The Sea, Alexander Petrov, Canada
Ring of Fire, Andreas Hykade, Germany
The Periwig Maker, Steffen Shaffler, Germany

Deanna Morse is an animator and Professor at Grand Valley State University in Michigan.

Stressed Out Animation
by Charles Wilson

Animation: *Stressed*
Animator: *Charles Wilson*
Studio: *Smudge Animation*

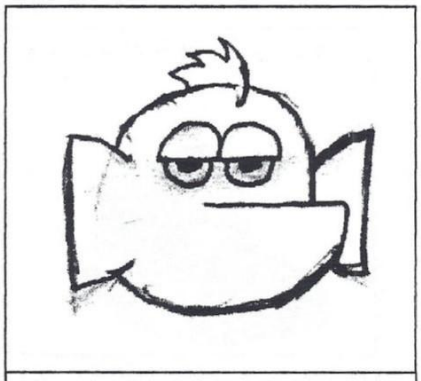
The Idea
Back in the days before Dilbert and the Far Side, office workers used to xerox and pass around full-page cartoons describing life in the rat race. My personal favorite was a fish swimming in a blender, screaming about how "he couldn't handle the stress!" Years later, when I was looking for a simple animation idea to help me learn the latest versions of Macromedia Flash and Director, I thought, eh, why not?

The Story
The final animation is a simple one-gag story. As I looked at expanding the idea from one picture into a full ninety-second animation, the cast had to grow from one fish into three fish. I decided that there would be two bored fish and only one stressed fish. The whole gag revolves around how the stressed fish awaits his impending doom while the two bored fish seem oblivious of the fact that they're in a blender.

During the animation, the shots never quite reveal the precarious predicament that all three fish are in. However, a relationship is drawn between the stressed fish and a clock on the wall. As the clock gets closer to 12 noon, the stressed fish gets more nervous. Finally, the clock strikes 12 and the stressed fish snaps. He screams then goes back to trembling. After he screams, the bored fish look at him, then they edge away from him to the opposite sides of the tank.

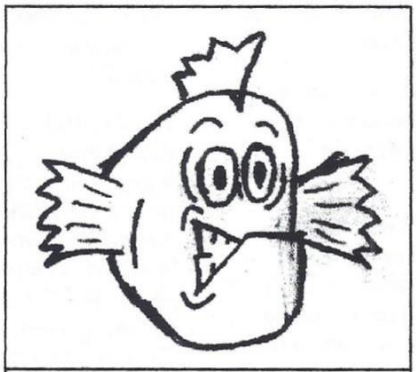
The final shots before the credits roll are of the three fish as we track out and see that they're swimming in a blender that is resting on a kitchen counter. After the credits roll, I finish the animation with one last poke at the fish. The two bored fish look off-screen and say "oh." The last shot is of a cat standing in front of the blender getting ready to hit the puree button. Cut to black.

Initial character sketches
Other than the fact that I added tail fins, the stressed fish hasnít changed much from the initial design.



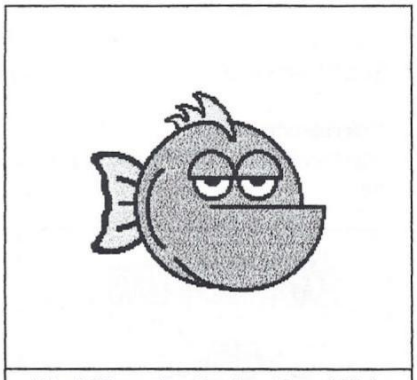
Character Concept Sketch: Bored Fish

However, I had to change the bored fish. When I designed him, he had two pectoral fins. Unfortunately, the pectoral fins just didn't look good. They ended up taking too much space on either side of the bored fish's body. And when I animated the fins, they ended up looking like big, floppy ears. The fin on the right side made it hard to see the gill and the fin on the left side looked like it was coming out of the fish's mouth. A command decision was made and the pectoral fins had to go.

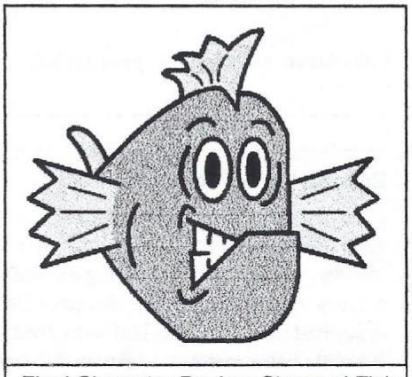


Character Concept Sketch: Stressed Fish

Final character designs
As you can see, the fish look a lot cleaner in the final images than they did in the initial sketches.



Final Character Design: Bored Fish



Final Character Design: Stressed Fish

In this animation, the fish need to be at different sizes, depending on the shot, so several more command decisions were made. If I had gone for detail and drawn or texture mapped scales on the fish, it would have created far too much noise and pixellation when enlarging or shrinking the character models. If I had tried to use too many colors, I might have run into color banding. By removing the pectoral fins, having no visible scales, and keeping the color scheme down to a couple of solid colors, the fish look clean and sharp no matter what resolution they are displayed at.

Where I'm at right now
At the time of this article, all the character models have been created, the soundtrack is finished, and the sets are being designed and modeled. According to my current timetable, I expect to have Stressed finished just in time to bring with me to this yearís Ottawa International

Stressed (Wilson) continued on 5

An Stressed Animation (Wilson) continued from 4

Animation Festival. If you see me at any of the Chez Ani functions, say "hi" and ask to see Stressed. If I don't have it done, then you can taunt me into finishing it (grin).

In our next newsletter, I'll be discussing my animation process as well as some things I learned about Flash and Director that made animating this story a lot easier.

Charles Wilson is an independent animator and the president/lead animator of Smudge Animation, located in Bath, Michigan. In 1997, Charles graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology's Film/Video department where he earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Computer Animation. Since then, he has worked as a web designer/programmer also doing freelance multimedia projects until the summer of 2000 when he created Smudge Animation. Stressed is his first animation created through Smudge Animation. He can be reached at Smudge_Anim@yahoo.com Smudge_Anim@yahoo.com and his work can be viewed at www.geocities.com/Smudge_Anim/.

Festival Revue & Worldart.com

I am writing to request show reels of animations for broadcast on both Festival Revue & Worldart.com TV which is currently under development and aims to broadcast 24 Hrs, 365 days a year.

Festival Revue was founded in 1998 and is the single largest addition to the Edinburgh Festival since its inception fifty-four years ago. One of its greatest achievements has been to extend the festival's founders 'ideal surroundings' to a global audience. In addition to the 1.1 million people who visited the Festival Revue stage, over 5 million people in 85 different countries visited its website. In 1999 Festival Revue attracted a further 1.5 million viewers when it broadcast live to a giant screen in London's Covent Garden Piazza. This year we are looking to expand to New York City.

What we are looking for
Festival Revue & Worldart.com are dedicated to broadcasting live content of the world's art festivals to art lovers across the globe. We are also looking for high quality works - short films, video art, footage from degree/fashion shows - material that will look visually stunning on giant video screens and the internet.

We are looking to you because Festival Revue & Worldart.com believe that the undiscovered and original talent of your students deserves greater exposure and that the Edinburgh Festival, renowned for it's innovation and quality, provides the perfect forum. But we can only achieve this with your help.

Primarily, we are looking for submissions in the form of a showreel (i.e. individual student works separated by your institutions logo) that we can broadcast live during the Edinburgh Festival and beyond. This will promote and recognise the importance of your institution in the continued development of the arts. However, individual pieces are acceptable for submission.

Specifications
Provided on broadcast quality format (preferably BETA SP, DVC or DVD but SVHS will also be accepted). All works must have Copyright clearance for any material used within the work that is not of their own making. All work should be submitted clearly labeled with name, address and contact number, together with a self-addressed envelope and a brief description of your work summarising its content.

All submissions should be sent to:
For further information contact in the first instance:-

FAO: Jasper Kynaston

Festival Revue festivalrevue@totalise.co.uk
PO Box 23332 fax no. 0131 248 2034
Edinburgh
EH3 8WU
SCOTLAND

This is a tremendous opportunity for your institution and students to participate in the world's largest arts broadcast. However, our request for submissions does not stop at this years broadcast. We will be looking for submissions throughout the year, so if you have any pieces of work in the future please send them to us.

Additionally, any work submitted will be considered for the Worldart.com TV broadcast, giving your work the possibility of further worldwide exposure.

Thanks for your assistance.

Ian Murray

Production/Operations Manager
Worldart.com Ltd.

Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design's New Animation Program

About Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design (RMCAD)
Location: Denver, Colorado
Founded: 1963 by Philip J. Steele.
Offers BFA degrees in the following: Graphic Design and Interactive Media, Illustration, Painting, Sculpture, Interior Design, and a new program in Animation.
Enrollment: Averages 400 students.
Emphasizes: Vision, creativity, innovation, leadership, conceptual thinking, and technical expertise. RMCAD is proud of its faculty of artists and designers who share their professional expertise with students.

Animation Program Mission Statement
There is only one truly interdisciplinary visual art that merges all the genres into one medium able to evolve in motion unbounded by time, reality or physical laws. It blends art, writing, storytelling, drawing, design, sculpture, acting, filmmaking, art direction and film directing into the wondrous art of "animation".

At the very core of the Animation Arts Department is our desire to balance the intellectual and the critical aspects of visual communication and art with professional production attitudes required in the real world.

Drawn animation - Artists explore the metamorphic powers of bringing to life the purest of lines or most alien of visions. Within a two-dimensional plane, they learn to inject meaning and purpose into evolving storytelling, thus communicating impressions aimed at inspiring the audience.

Stop motion - Students explore the exciting potential of injecting life into miniature worlds of their design and creation. While studying qualities of depth, texture, motion within space, evoking mood via light and shadow within the expanse of a dimensional model, animators bestow life onto their microcosms.

Clay animation - The world of clay, which merges the metamorphic skill of drawn animation with the spatial qualities of stop motion. Clay's pliability offers students a rare ability to enhance one's vision via a use of this metamorphic, sculptural, organic, textural and tactual animation medium. After working on their personal projects, students are teamed on group projects teaching collaboration, division of production responsibilities and ability to handle a wide range of professional, studio like tasks.

Computer animation - Primed, a student is ready to enter the digital realm of computer animation. "CGI" is the future and all artists owe themselves a digital experience. We strive to insure that this grand technology does not eclipse either concepts or creativity for computer animation must merge the creative, esthetic and mystical with the pragmatic and technical. Our expert faculty is proficient in both: the software and hardware as well as the art of computer animation. Their aim is to enable students to reach out beyond that which is obvious, limited or restricted by the physical reality.

We focus on the evolution of concept, synopses, storytelling, storyboarding, character and environments design, development of personality, acting, choreography, art and animation directing, and production. We insure that students learn to be conscientious about the ways they schedule, present and produce their assignments.

Ours is a multiple task. We offer a refuge for students avid to learn about their creativity, teach low and high-tech tools enabling them to bring ideas to life and balance artistic creativity with technology to evolve animation artists able to convey original ideas and handle all stages of the production processes.

Creative Lab

Within a three-year time span, RMCAD intends to develop "The Creative Lab" in conjunction with its new Animation program.

The "Creative Lab" is a unique concept merging the worlds of advanced art education with the innovative design atelier, encompassing an entire spectrum of communication, visual arts, and a production studio aimed at the development of original projects, programming and intellectual properties for at all forms of entertainment, television, theme park or game industries. By drawing upon the best of both worlds- the creative raw talent of young artists, shaped by RMCAD's undergraduate learning and its highly experienced faculty, comprised of the independent art practitioners, the "Creative Lab" merges the wild, fresh ideas of the new and eager to be tested with the battle tested experience, creative guidance and professionalism. This truly unique amalgamation is aimed at addressing diverse, innovative, educational, creative and production challenges of the ever-evolving entertainment and medium industries as well as the advancement of our college into an ever challenging and farther-reaching future.

The intent of a majority of RMCAD's undergraduate students is to develop the essential artistic, creative and technical skills which, expressed via sample reels of animations, will enable them to confidently face the outside employment market or, more importantly, be sought after by major studios allured by a unique balance of the artistic and practical qualities RMCAD develops. However, there are also those students who wish to use the undergraduate education only as a springboard for the advanced studies attainable via RMCAD's innovative "Creative Lab". There, such challenge seeking individuals are free to grow further, evolve and refine their artistic skills and creative visions by embarking on innovative, daring endeavors not easily attainable once on the outside. By offering auxiliary maturation time the Lab acts as a buffer, the go between the pure learning and experimental outgrowth attained via undergraduate education and the challenging, exacting realities of the awaiting world of the professional entertainment industry.

"Creative Lab" provides a professional, creative and production like studio environment offering all of the modern tools, technologies, production methodologies, creative guidance or direction for development and execution of innovative, ground breaking creative art, visual communication, traditional, drawing, experimental, stop motion or clay animation and all of the types of computer animation. While encompassing all of the art genres taught at RMCAD, it takes students to a higher, more advanced level subjecting the learned skills, both manual and intellectual, to a span of creative challenges posed by the context of such a realistic production environment.

About Edward Bakst, Department Chair
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Designer/Director
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e-mail: EBakstCGI@aol.com

Icebox

Want your amazing flash animation to be seen by everybody? Send it to Icebox.

Icebox is an assembly of Hollywood's top writers, producers and animators that have partnered to create original animated shows for the Web.

Among the talent developing original shows for Icebox are the creators, writers, and executive producers of *The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill*, *The Critic*, *The X-Files*, *Party of Five*, *Seinfeld*, *Ren and Stimpy*, and *South Park: Bigger, Longer, Uncut*.

We showcase the best in Independent animation. Providing a venue for undiscovered creators to showcase submissions alongside Hollywood's best and get the attention their animations deserve.

Benefits include mass exposure, sharing a stage with Hollywood's top writers and producers, gaining free access to a variety of programs and services. The independents section provides a space for animators and viewers to share their knowledge of animation technologies, link to animation organizations, and discuss topics pertinent to them the entertainment community.

Talent scouts are among those growing increasingly attentive to stand-out submissions on the site. Some of Icebox's independent submitters attained representation and development deals shortly after having their animations featured on Icebox Independents.

So what gets posted? We are receptive to everything from the classic fable of a legendary hero's conquests to a short about a gun-totting, chicken-murdering, yet undeniably lovable Easter bunny. As long as the animations don't contain any hate or pornography, Icebox provides a home.

To check out the shows that Hollywood couldn't make and to learn more about the independent submission process, visit www.icebox.com.

10th Annual Animators Conference - Making it a DOOZY!

We are in the process of researching venues and planning a spectacular event for our **10th annual conference in 2002**. We need your input! Please email your survey results to Mary Lou Haynes before September 30, 2000. Please make as many copies as needed.

These are things I would like at 10th Annual Animators Conference & Retreat (Check all that apply)

AMENITIES
__Outdoor Pool
__Indoor Pool
__Tennis courts
__Golf course
__Whirlpool
__Restaturant (s)
__Kitchenette(Fridge, MW, Stove)
__Suite (e.g. separate bedroom and parlor/sitting area)
__Airport Transportation
__Biking
__Walking trails
__Horseback riding
__Boating
__Fitness Center/Gym
__Spa (hair, nails, etc)
__Massage

LOCATION
___Chicago Loop/Downtown
___Chicago Suburbs (remote resort)
___Illinois (remote resort)
___Michigan (city)
___Michigan (remote resort)
___Indiana (city)
___Indiana (remote resort)
___Nearby acces to Public transportation (Trains, Busses, etc)

LODGING - WOULD YOU SHARE A ROOM OR SUITE?
___yes (same sex)
___yes (Co-ed)
___no

Smoking preference:
__smoker
__non-smoking

Thanks for your support!

Mail to:
M.L. Haynes
PMB 324
3400 w 11th St
Chicago, IL 60655 USA

FALL 2000

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

FALL 2000

Exposing Yourself: It's All In the Timing

by Jim Middleton

One of the most intimidating challenges to face either as a writer or an animator is nothing more than a piece of pure white, plain, blank paper. Nothing can begin until you make that first mark. One of the means I find helpful in coming to grips with a project is to approach it indirectly, to toy with fussy details. To this end, I turn to the venerable exposure sheet.

Generally unnecessary if doing the "straight ahead" approach to animation, the exposure sheet is indispensable if you are doing anything involving lip-synch, musical timing, or pacing. It's one thing to animate a walk--it becomes much easier if referring to an exposure sheet tells you the cycle has to be completed in 82 frames. Similarly, endless repetition of a piece of music will automatically tune you to the necessary timing or make you absolutely sick of the tune--or both.

An exposure sheet is generally tied in with a storyboard. The storyboard serves as an outline. The exposure sheet fills in every little gap. This is because it represents every single frame of film or video that is being animated. For multiple cel animation, each layer of animation is given its own column. However, for this brief discussion, I will approach the exposure sheet from the viewpoint of the enthusiast, or student, working within the constraints of both limited time and money.

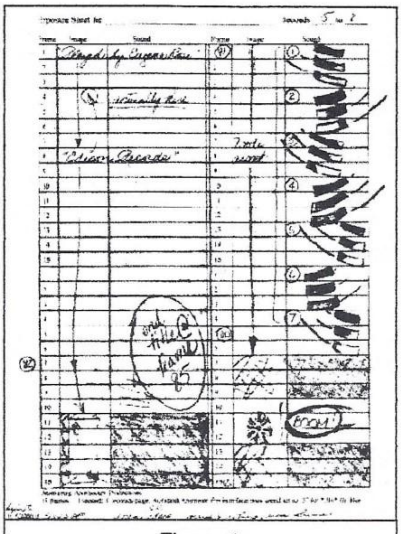

Figure 1

I have tried several varieties over the past years. Initially, I made a modification of the example given in Kit Laybourne's excellent reference, The *Animation Book* (the 1998 edition still available and published by Three Rivers Press, 201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022, $24.95; mine was from the earlier 1979 edition). I stayed with the basic format, first frame on top, running to the bottom. Keeping things as simple as possible, there were only a couple of rows to indicate sound and image, and of course a column to indicate the frame number (figure 1). With this approach, I was able to squeeze four seconds onto each page. For brief sequences this worked, but the difficulty in keeping track of the specific frames became a problem (I found that I could quickly lose count and drop several frames at inopportune places). I also found that the top to bottom

All In the Timing (Middleton) continued on 3

IMAX Cyberworld 3D

Reviewed by Charles Wilson

Honestly folks, while Cyberworld was a wonderful film, I could have lived without the Cyberworld Galleria segment where the hostess Phig (voiced by Jenna Elfman) introduced the animated segments while fighting computer bugs. I didnít feel that the film needed an animated vehicle to tie the segments together, especially one that became distracting after the first couple of minutes. Because this film was all about showcasing some truly intriguing technology, I would have been happy with simple titles, or even a Fantasia 2000 style live-action host to introduce the animations. While the concept was interesting at first, it was difficult to understand what Phig and the computer bugs were saying during their interludes. I found myself wishing for the next animated segment whenever Phig or the bugs came onscreen.

Well, now that I have stated the only thing that I didnít like about the movie, let us talk about what I did like. I truly loved the other animation clips and found myself wishing to see these short films in their entirety. I realize that these were older films, retooled following IMAX's specifications, but I loved watching them just the same. The stereoscopic imaging process left me at the edge of my seat during Flipbook, Krakken, and Tonight's Performance. These films had a good balance between rich backgrounds and lively characters. I found the 3D effect easier to see during the long shots of waterfalls and flying fortresses. But by far, the easiest

IMAX (Wilson) continued on 3

Inside this Issue

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Letter from the Editor *by Jennifer Eldred*

Members be sure to renew your ASIFA/Central membership. All 2000 memberships are up for renewal on December 31. The renewal application can be found on the back of this edition. Don't miss a beat, renew today! (Membership for 2001 starts on January 1 and continues till December 31, 2001.)

Plans are underway for the 2001 ASIFA/Central Conference and Retreat so be sure to mark your calendars for the Conference being held April 27 - April 29, 2001. If you would like to contribute, volunteer or apply to be a presenter at the Conference please contact the Conference Chair, Melissa Bouwman at asifa_central@hotmail.com See future Frame by Frames for Conference registration forms and agendas.

As we come to the end of another year, I would like to thank all of the contributing writers who help keep ASIFA/Central members informed and connected throughout the year. Keep those great articles coming!

Happy Holidays!
Jennifer Eldred

The deadline for the Winter 2001 Edition of Frame by Frame is January 15, 2001.

ASIFA Opens First Indian Chapter
by Michael Saltzman

(*October 16, 2000*) It was announced today that ASIFA Central in Zagreb, Croatia, the only internationally sanctioned organization for animation, will open a chapter in India. This new chapter will be located in the city of Trivandrum within the Indian state of Kerala, home of Toonz Animation India. The first meeting of ASIFA India will occur during The 2nd Annual Week With The Masters Animation Celebration, Toonz Animation India's high profile animation festival, held October 30 - November 3, 2000.

Heading up ASIFA's newest chapter is Bill Dennis, president and CEO of Toonz Animation India. Dennis comes to ASIFA's chapter with almost three decades of experience in the animation industry, having worked on such animated classics as, "The Lion King," "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin," and "The Little Mermaid."

The Indian chapter, which will be devoted to the encouragement and dissemination of film animation as an art and communication form, opens with 20 members. Tentatively, the new chapter's board includes; Bill Dennis as president, Suhael Merchant from Toonsense Studios as vice president, and Cathy Peza, Toonz Animation India's studio manager, as treasurer.

ASIFA, an organization for professional animators, has grown to over 1700 members in 55 countries during its 40-year history. The national chapters maintain the most immediate and direct contact with members, many, like the American regional groups, with their own monthly newsletters and screenings. ASIFA provides the linkage between all the chapters as well as a direct connection to International events such as animation festivals and seminars. For more information on ASIFA, refer to their website at http://asifa.net.

For more information on The Second Annual Week with The Masters please visit their website at www.toonzanimationindia.com

ASIFA/Central Mission Statement
ASIFA: Association Internationale du Film d' Animation

The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. – adopted 3/92

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StoryBoard Contest
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Web site Design:
Rita Dobias, rawd@hotmail.com

Web site:
http:/www.asifa.org/animate

E-mail: asifa@asifa.org

ASIFA/Central Conference:
April 27 - April 29, 2001

To contribute or volunteer contact:
Randy Rockafellow
E-mail: rrockafellow2@juno.com

To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

All In the Timing (Middleton) continued from 1

approach was awkward. This led to the next version. This one concerned itself less with the number of seconds and drew instead on the number of frames. Each sheet is now able to hold 50 frames; in addition, I added a thumbnail box for each frame to allow for sketching in random notes on what should be going on with the synchronization. I also chose to arrange things left-to-right, to keep with the feel of "reading the soundtrack" on the exposure sheet. This format also allows me to consolidate a storyboard approach with the exposure sheet.

With this method, I am able to haul around a few sheets and sketch in ideas when time permits before settling down to a stack of animation paper or a computer terminal. Still, the most time consuming part of the project is the filling out of the sheet itself. Presently, I take the soundtrack and pump it into my wonderfully temperamental Autodesk Animator Studio (version 0.5, I believe, designed when Windows was still The Chicago Project), and play it bit by bit, generally in 10-15 frame increments, until I have the entire thing transcribed onto paper. Right now, the 2220 frames for "Good Garbage 2001" take up 45 pages and represent the better efforts of the La Scala Orchestra's recording of "Il Segreto di Suzanna" from 1921. This sounds substantial, but using my previous format without the advantage of the thumbnail

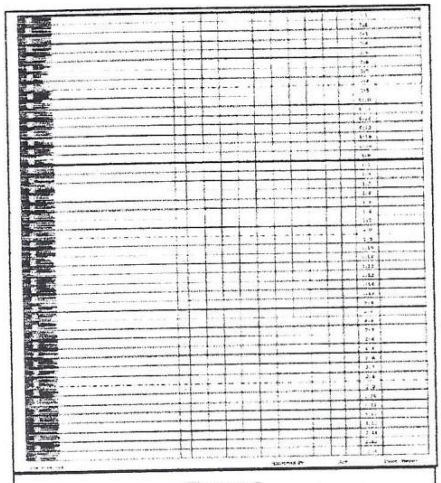


Figure 3

sketches would still take up 37 sheets, and the earlier still version, based on the classic format, would represent over 90 pages. When working on solo projects, it makes a difference.

Earlier, I mentioned the use of a computer. Granted, most of this activity has been supplanted in commercial studios with computer programming, and most of the newer 2D software integrates exposure sheets with their complete package (the CTP software being an excellent example). Stand-alone programs do exist for storyboard and timing, however. One recent example, "Board Master" (www.boardmastersoftware.com) from Canada, also markets itself as a means to assist presentations beyond those involving animation. While it may be of use in a commercial house setting, I found it fairly cumbersome for independent usage. Also, its exposure sheet printout was of the classic format, making for a ponderous print time without presenting any clear advantage for viewing the soundtrack. The demonstration file did have some nice touches and would probably work well as an alternative to a slide show for a production house; however, I think that many of its functions must already be available in completely-packaged animation software. Much of what it offered for presentation could be replicated with Power Point or Corel's Presentation software. The retail of $179 isn't too bad, and it is available online, but I am not sure if it's for everyone--the amount of time I spent scanning in images, converting to appropriate formats, tweaking *.wav files, and typing in comments (not to mention the crashes) could have been spent in actual animation. But then, it was less intimidating than that pure white, plain, blank paper! - *Jim Middletom*

IMAX (Wilson) continued from 1

characters to see in 3D were the ones who fit completely within the boundaries of the theatre's viewing screen. These characters (ranging from underwater seal-like critters to flying heads) jumped out into the visual space between the screen and myself while characters that intersected one of the boundaries lost their 3D effect. As some of the larger creatures and machines passed across the screen, they had a tendency to flicker into and out of 3D.

The animation segments themselves were produced by a variety of studios all around the world. The segments were as follows: Pacific Data Images showcased two joint effort films, Antz from DreamWorks/PDI, and the Simpsons from 20th Century Fox/PDI. Monkey Brain Sushi was from Sony Pictures Imageworks. Joe Fly and Sanchez was entered by Spans & Partner. Krakken came from Ex Machina and Liberation was from Pet Shot Boys Partnership/Eye Development. Finally there was Out of the Box created by RezN8, Flipbook from Inertia Pictures, and Tonight's Performance directed by Paul Sidlo. The Cyberworld Galleria segment was produced at IMAX using their SANDEE (Stereo Animation Drawing Device) system.

All of the older animations were re-rendered using the specifications set up by IMAX in order to get the appropriate camera angles necessary for converting the images into a format suitable for stereoscopic viewing. The conversion process was performed using IMAX Corporation's patent-pending 3D process and since the process was done on computers running Intel Pentium III processors, the microchip giant graciously helped IMAX Corporation fund this film.

For those of you who would like to learn more about this film and the SANDEE process that created it, there are two excellent articles in the October 2000 issues of Animation Magazine and Animation World Network's Animation World Magazine. IMAX also has a review of their SANDEE system on their website at http://www.imax.com/innovations/latest_devs/sandde.html.

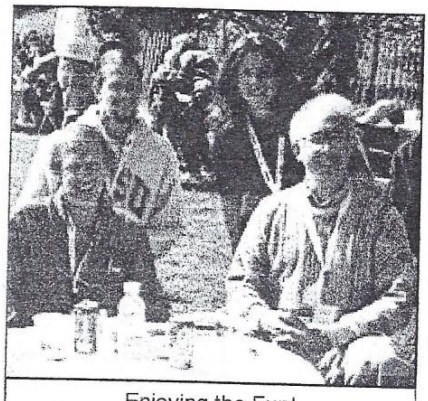
In the final analysis, I would recommend watching this film at least once, if for no other reason than saying "oo" and "ah" at the technology that made this film possible. IMAX is currently planning some joint ventures with PDI and Mainframe in the future, including a special release of PDI's Shrek. So if Cyberworld is any indication, IMAX is gearing up to take us on a wild ride in the not too distant future.

About the Author

Charles Wilson is an independent animator and the president/lead animator of Smudge Animation, located in Bath, Michigan. In 1997, Charles graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology's Film/Video department where he earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Computer Animation. Since then, he has worked as a web designer/programmer also doing freelance multimedia projects until the summer of 2000 when he created Smudge Animation. He can be reached at Smudge_Anim@yahoo.com and his work can be viewed at www.geocities.com/Smudge_Anim/

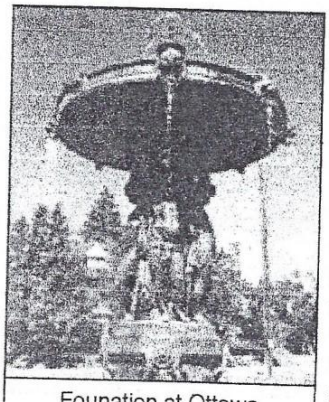
Ottawa: Bad Craziness
by Jim Middleton

The pumpkins were there, the animators were there, the Chez Ani was there, and the weather was mostly cooperative. So why did this festival have such a sour feel to it this time? The "Best of Show" was the German entry "Ring of Fire," a black and white orgiastic allegory with a literal bump and grind background of sexual imagry. Considering that "The Old Man and the Sea" was casually dismissed from the competition, it seemed like giving "Porky's" an Academy Award while tossing aside "Citizen Kane" because "everyone has seen it." Sexual imagry seemed to be a guaranteed way to obtain screen time as well, as if to further the stereotype that animators are mostly males who didn't get to date much in high school. One night's competition was bracketed by two films dealing with sexual abuse--"The Hat" was an eternal succession of images that included a little girl astride an enormous phallus, while "Daddy and I" brought a less-abstract presentation of a similar message from Korea. Even the excellent "Four Minutes" and "Crime and Punishment" couldn't shake the pall of the evening.



Enjoying the Fun!

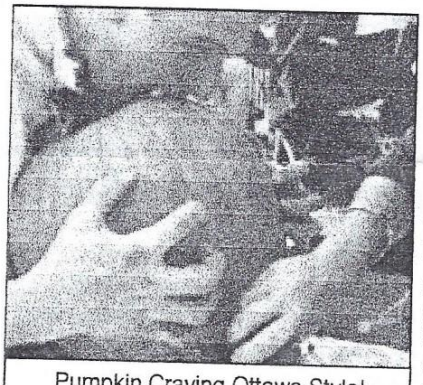
Chris Robinson provided a message at the beginning of the festival's program that said "cradle elsewhere." He also introduced the evening's showings with some more-than-indelicate comments and gave the proceedings more the atmosphere of a bad frat party than a good animation festival. His intent was lost on most of the audience. Was it sarcasm? Was it an Andy Kaufman knock-off? Was there real booze in his hip flask? And why this venue to put on his show? (The "Spike and Mike" showing was already booked, after all.) This is especially sad in light of some of his fine essays that have appeared in various Animation publications and even in the festival program, where he also wrote, "I know when to tell lies that ring of truths." I wish he had chosen to do it somewhere else. It took the wonderful mimicry of David McCallum, as the "Voice of the Festival," to salvage one evening with his inspired reading of Shakespeare's 18th Sonnet, using the voices of Presidents Kennedy through Clinton.



Founation at Ottawa

Having vented thus, much of the festival remained noteworthy. The retrospectives were very fine, highlighted by the Computer panorama (with the latest innovation test from Pixar, this year being the feathers in "For The Birds;" however, "Bunny" and "Fishing" were the jaw-droppers for that show), a phenomenal tribute to jazz in animation (with an outrageous, and probably never to be televised "Tin Pan Alley Cats" by Clampett), and an overdue tribute to Paul Fierlinger. "Muratti and Sarotti: The History of German Animation" was a well-crafted documentary, if somewhat heavy on technique (I wanted to see more rather than hear about the films). The workshops on distribution and portfolios quickly became a Q and A about Why Aren't You Hiring meeeeeee? (hungry animators in their 20s, nervous animators in their 30s, frantic animators in their 40s...oh no! I'm passe!!) but the presentation on puppet animation from the production team that brought "The Periwig Maker" to the festival was great. One of the workshops was held in a room painted completely black, prompting one of the panelists to comment, "Welcome to our review of Austrian experimental cinema."

On a tourist note, I have to state that Ottawa remains one of the finest stops for a vacation. When it rains, umbrellas are everywhere and inexpensive, the National Gallery is still FREE FREE FREE and the presence of a bikini store in the Eaton mall seems almost like wishful thinking. And how many cel phones can one group of people have? And what is it with Exhaust Industrial Strength jeans? Do you want that logo on your derrier? And where can I find a "I ! my Lithium" T-shirt?



Pumpkin Craving Ottawa Style!

And, finally, at the Cafe Supreme, it took the coordinated efforts of three people--an off-duty manager, a woman assistant manager, and a trainee--to make a mocha for me. The young man who had taken my order had forgotten what I ordered by the time he went to ring it up, and then he had to refer to the register twice as he tried to make change for me (it was $3, I had given him a ten). He looked at me with the eyes of a lost puppy and said, "I'm sorry about this. I am really very stupid."

You don't get sincerity like that in the United States.

- *Jim Middleton*

Calendar for Show:
Independent Voices: The Art of Animation

Independent Voices: The Art of Animation
An exhibit of animated films and animation artwork featuring five American independent animation artists.

February 26 - March 30th, 2001 in the Art Gallery at Louis Armstrong Performing Arts Center Grand Valley State University, Allendale Campus

Overview of dates:
February 26, 5-7 p.m. Gallery, opening reception
February 27, 10 - 11:30 am, 174 LSH: Karen Aqua screens her work
February 27, 1-3 p.m., 114 HRY: Karen Aqua meets with students
March 15, 1-3 p.m., Gallery: Faith Hubley speaking to students
March 15 & 16, 7:30 p.m., UICA: Faith Hubley, film screening and Q&A
March 17, 7 p.m. & 9 p.m., UICA Faith Hubley film screening
March 29, 5 p.m., Gallery: Gallery talk led by Deanna Morse
March 30, Show closes

Gallery hours:
Monday through Friday 10-5, Thursday 10-7
Tel. 616-895-2564 (The gallery will be closed the week of March 5-9th during spring break.)

Featured artist/animators:
Karen Aqua John Canemaker
Joan Gratz Faith Hubley Deanna Morse

Opening reception:
February 26th, 2001, 5-7 p.m.

Karen Aqua, guest artist
On campus Tuesday, February 27th.
Screening and discussing her films February 27th, 10 - 11:30 am, 174 LSH. Meeting with animation students February 27th, 1-3 p.m., 114 HRY.

Faith Hubley, guest artist
On campus March 15th, 1-3 p.m.
Speaking to students in the Art Gallery. Faith Hubley screens her films at the UICA, March 15-17. Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, 41 Sheldon Blvd. SE
Grand Rapids, MI. 49503. Tel. 616 454-7000.

Thursday, March 15th 7:30 screening, followed by Q & A with Faith Friday, March 16th, 7:30 screening, followed by Q & A with Faith Saturday, March 17th, Film screenings 7 and 9 p.m.

Joan Gratz
Joan Gratz will be a juror at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, Michigan, March 13-18th. Joan will screen her work during the festival. Tel. 734-995-5356

Deanna Morse
Deanna Morse will lead a Gallery talk on Thursday March 29 at 5 p.m. (in the Gallery)

Be a Presenter at the 2001 ASIFA/Central Animator's Retreat

Call for Presenters:
Looking for a Good Time?

Interested in rubbing elbows with some of the finest folks the midwest animation community has to offer?

Want to attend the 2001 conference and not have to pay for your registration, PLUS see your name on an attractive certificate?

BE A PRESENTER for the 2001 ASIFA CENTRAL ANIMATOR'S RETREAT!

Your responsibilities would include:
30 to 60 minute presentation (Q&A time included).
Supplying a written bio for the conference brochure.
Providing for your own transportation to the conference site and possibly housing at or near the lodge.

What you get in return:
A weekend of **FUN**! Animation Screenings, Hands on activities, Networking, Intellectually stimulating conversations that get those creative juices flowing, Miles of hiking trails to waterfalls and beautiful scenic overlooks, Campfires, Hot Tub...You get the idea.

Exposure to a great group of people! The folks that attend the retreat are supportive, friendly, and want to hear what you have to say. The retreat is generally a smaller venue, so if crowds are not your scene, you're safe with us!

This year the retreat takes place April 27 - 29, 2001.
Mark those dates on your calendar!

If you would like more information please call Melissa Bouwman at (616) 813-5211 or e-mail her at asifa_central@hotmail.com.

If you would like to propose a presentation, send your proposal (topic you wish to present, how much time you will need, A/V requirements, bio, etc.) to:

Melissa Bouwman
121 Madison SE #7
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Stressed Out Animation Part II

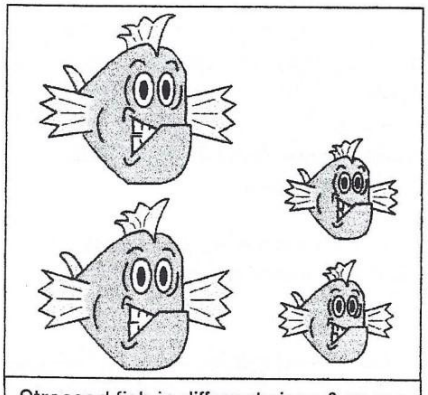
by Charles Wilson

Authors's Note: My animation studio is centered on a PC-based computer system. While all my pre-production work (storyboards & model sheets) are done with pencil and paper, everything else is done in computer. Over the past few years, I've refined the process that I use for producing animated shorts. The process is composed of six stages: modeling, set-design, animation, sound recording & layering, image touch-up, and editing & video output.

The Animation Process

1. Modeling

All characters were modeled using Macromedia Flash. This decision was made so that the characters could be resized and still maintain a high level of resolution. I would have had Stress finished back in March except I was trying to figure out a solution to my modeling problem. In Macromedia Director, when bitmaps are resized there also can come a loss in resolution. Color banding occurs, as does improperly sized features. Since Flash is vector-based, I could resize the characters as much as I wanted content in the knowledge that the fish would look just as good in the small poses as the large.



Stressed fish in different sizes & poses

Once I had the characters resized, I exported them as a bitmap image. The bitmaps were then imported into Director and the individual characters were separated into individual cast members.

I also modeled and animated the clock's poses in Photoshop. Using Photoshopís lighting filters, I was able to create a 3-D-looking clock. Then, using layers and the lighting filters, hands were added in each position including the anticipation and follow-through positions. So when I was finished, I had one file with every pose. These individual poses were then exported into separate bitmaps and imported into Director just like the fish models.

2. Animation

Once I had all the fish and clock bitmaps in each pose, I assembled the character animation. Moving body parts were animated by creating multiple copies of the body part in each pose. Take for example, the bored fish's eyes blinking. I created several sets of eyes and modified each set slightly so that they were in the correct poses to blink shut and then open again.

After creating all the moving body parts, I placed them in the appropriate location for each pose. Using this limited style of animation, I didn't have to recreate the entire fish for each action, only the parts that moved.

The character movement was then tested in each scene using Director's animation playback controls. If the motion didnít work, it was recreated. All the motion was tested and completed for every scene before I created the background and props.

3. Set design

Once the character animation was finished, I built the backgrounds and props and placed them into the appropriate scenes. In my animation process, I'm still toying with where set design belongs. Sometimes I want to build the sets first just to get an idea of scale. Other times I want to jump right into the animation and start working with motion. Since I already had an idea of what size the characters needed to be, I left set design until the end.

Each background would be created and layered behind the moving characters until all twenty-two scenes were finished. Since all the assembling and motion tests were done in Director, I used Director's paint tools to build most of the sets: the wallpaper, the tiled counter, the blender, etc.

Finally, the motion was tested once again as a completed scene. And, if it worked, then the scene was exported as sequential bitmaps.

4. Image touch-up

Due to a problem in either Adobe Premiere or Macromedia Director, Premiere cannot import bitmaps that were exported from Director. No problem there, Jasc Paint Shop Pro to the rescue! Using PSP's batch conversion option, I converted all the bitmaps from Windows BMP files to TIFF files which were then imported into Premiere. I also used this opportunity to touch up any image that picked up artifacts during the export and conversion process. Thankfully, there weren't many since I ended up with over one thousand images.

5. Sound Recording & Layering

When I build the animatic during the pre-production phase, all sounds are recorded using Sound Forge and then layered in Premiere. So what I end up with is my storyboard images synchronized with my soundtrack. This is key, because when I start importing the images and building the animation in Premiere, I visually line up the sequenced images with the appropriate storyboard scene in the animatic.

6. Editing & Video Output

Once the bitmaps are synchronized with the layered sound files that compose the soundtrack, I compile the movie into an AVI file. Then the animation is viewed, edited, re-compiled and reviewed until I get it right. What I'm looking for is timing issues. Does the scene flow fast enough into the next scene? Does the scene need to be cut shorter? Does the sound remain

Stressed (Wilson) continued on 7

Call for Sponsors

Corporate Sponsors sought for the 9th Annual Conference & Retreat

The annual Midwest Animator's Conference and Retreat could benefit from financial support. We would like to be able to offer a paid housing package to presenters, and would like to find sponsors for the Saturday afternoon picnic.

Donors will receive acknowlegement in all promotional materials, as well as complimentary registration at the conference. All donations to ASIFA/Central are tax deductible.

Please contact:
Melissa Bouwman at
(616) 813-5211, or
1-877-702-8601 ext.4510,
or via e-mail:
asifa_central@hotmail.com

Stresses (Wilson) continued from 6

synchronized with the action? All these questions and more go into my thinking as I watch the movie over and over again until I'm satisfied with the final animation.

Finally, after the film is edited, I review it at several resolutions. I usually go for 640x480 for video output and 200x150 for Internet viewing. Once I was satisfied that the film was finished, I recorded it to video and downloaded it to my website.

Wrap-up

In my next article about Stress, I will be talking about how the film worked out. Between now and the next issue of Frame-by-Frame, I will have had the opportunity to show Stress to an audience as well as see it on a large screen. My final article will discuss audience reaction, what worked, what didn't, and what I will do differently on my next film.

- *Charles Wilson*

Dear ASIFA Central Members:

Now that I am settled in at the University of Tennessee, I am working with a local film festival called Valley Fest. We would really like to receive some animated works if you are interested in submitting.

Submission instructions are at:
http://www.valleyfest.com/
Happy Animating!

Ed Counts

INTERNET WORLD MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT FESTIVAL (ME FESTIVAL) CALL FOR SHORT FILM AND MEDIA ENTRIES FOR INAUGURAL ON-LINE COMPETITION.

Hollywood, CA Penton Media's Internet World's Media & Entertainment Festival (ME Festival) seeks short live-action films, animation, web commercials, web series, experimental works, under 15 minutes in length, for inaugural on-line competition. Winners will be announced March 13, 2001, during the two-day Internet World D2ME Spring Conference, at the Regal Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

Joy A. Kennelly is the Event Producer for the ME Festival which will debut selections LIVE on-line February 7th running through March 16th at www.internetworldmefestival.com.

Viewers, who log on, can vote for an Audience Award of their favorite short. StreamSearch, "The Remote Control of the Web", (www.ss.com) is responsible for the on-line production and distribution.

Filmmakers will vie for five prizes that include cash and all-expense paid trips to national and international Internet World 2001 conference sites.

Entry fees and deadlines are $40 by November 4; $60 by November 15; and $75 by 5pm on December 4. Forms and guidelines are available by calling the ME Festival hotline at 310 558-6691 or reviewing the web-site, www.pentonevents.com/internetworldspring.

For additional information contact:
Marcia N. Groff (Event Publicist) 310/855-0498
Joy A. Kennelly (Event Producer) 310/558-6691
Molly Molloy (Streamsearch Publicist) 310/315-1808

Member News:

In December, Deanna Morse will travel to Korea to be a juror at PISAF 2000: Puchon International Student Animated Film Festival.

You can read about the festival at http://www.pisaf.or.kr

Information on the jury is at:
http://www.pisaf.or.kr/ehc4.htm

ASIFA.net

A new stART animation on ASIFA.net was created by ASIFA/central treasurer Deanna Morse, who is also a Professor in the School of Communications at Grand Valley State University, Michigan.

You can see her animated Phenakistoscope in action at: www.asifa.net. You can read about her at:http://asifa.net/+/morse/index.html

ASIFA.net has started a new service for international members - offering free webpages for members.

You can read about it at http://asifa.net/freepages/index.html.

If you are interested in being a stART animator (providing an animated gif to go on the front of the webpage), please contact the editor, Thomas Renoldner. editor@asifa.net

SPRING 2001

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

SPRING 2001

My Day at the House of Mouse

by Charles Wilson

Whenever I tell people that I do animation, invariably the first question I hear is: "Have you ever been to Walt Disney World?" At which point I go into my diatribe about how I've never been to Disney, yes I'm sure it's a nice place, and no I have absolutely no desire to visit (what can I say, large crowds of happy people freak me out). But when people get insistent with me about the House of Mouse, I break down and mumble something about how it would be nice to attend one of those special "Behind the Scenes" animation tours where you get to do animation and talk to the animators. This is usually enough to placate the proponents of Disney.

Well, it finally happened. I had to go to a business conference in Disney World, Orlando. Even though it was a full week at the conference, I factored in a couple of hours to take the tour and was I glad that I did.

There are actually two animation tours: one that's open to the public and another where you have to sign up ahead of time. I went on both.

The first tour was the "Behind the Scenes" tour. It's a three hour tour--offered twice per week--that you have to schedule before you show up at the parks due to a limited number of spaces. We arrived right when the Disney/MGM Studios park opened and were whisked through security by our tour guide. The entire setup was designed to make us feel as though we were back in the 1930's and applying for an ink-and-paint job working on Disney's new feature film 'Snow White.' First, we were given a simple animation test that consisted of drawing a quick, two-page flipbook. Next, we were escorted around the park where we stopped at major milestones in Walt Disney's early career that have been recreated

House of Mouse (Wilson) continued on 7

Fantasia on DVD

by Jim Middleton

"Fantasia" has gone through a variety of transformations since it first appeared in 1940. After a disappointing road show run in larger cities, it was slashed by RKO to under 90 minutes for general distribution. The resulting version was a complete mystery to the huddled masses yearning for escapism from World War II and it pretty much vanished, and with it, Walt Disney's interest in pushing animation to a higher level of art.

The 60s brought an audience for its bright colors and interpreted drug references (it is doubtful that the animators who worked on the mushrooms in the Nutcracker sequence had that in mind), but by then the usual problems associated with film became evident. The spliced and diced "Fantasia" excerpted on

Fantasia (Middleton) continued on 4

Inside this Issue

ASIFA/Central Board Meeting
Letter from the President
and more ...

Letter from the Editor *by Jennifer Eldred*

Another successful conference and retreat has come and gone. Congrats go out to Melissa Bouwman who did a **great job** of coordinating this years' event. Once again it was good friends, great animators, wonderful weather and barbeque!

Next year's ASIFA/Central Conference and Retreat is the 10th Annual and will be held from April 26-28, 2002. Additional information on the 2002 Confernce will be published in this and future newsletters. Mary Lou Haynes and Dave Daruzska return to Chair the 2002 Conference. Plans are underway. If you would like to help out, be a presenter or volunteer, please contact Mary Lou at morgpk@aol.com.

If you are interested in submitting an article for the Summer 2001 edition the deadline is July 15.

Jennifer Eldred

The deadline for the Summer 2001 Edition of Frame by Frame is July 15, 2001.

Animation Scholarship Available

Applications are now available for next school year's International Helen Victoria Haynes World Peace Scholarship.

Each year, the Haynes Storyboard & Animation Scholarship program awards a $1,000 grant to one qualified student attending an accredited college or university by sponsoring a Storyboard Competition.

The money, contributed by the family & friends of the late Helen Victoria Haynes - former bilingual teacher, musician and church activist - defrays the cost of producing an animated PSA based on the theme 'How We Can Achieve World Peace'.

College students anywhere in the world are eligible. The deadline for applying with a Storyboard is **March 15, 2002.**

Winner will be announced in April. Winner is required to complete the PSA for screening at the 11th Annual Midwest Animators Conference in April 2003.

For an application with rules, send an email containing your postal address to: Program Director, HVH World Peace Storyboard & Animation Scholarship Competition morgpk@aol.com

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The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. – adopted 3/92

ASIFA/*Central* Volunteers and Project Leaders

Newsletter Designer/Editor & Vice President
Jennifer Eldred, eldredj@usa.net

President / Webmaster / Membership Coordinator
Randall Rockafellow
rrockafellow2@juno.com

Treasurer
Deanna Morse, morsed@gvsu.edu

Reel Coordinator
Jim Schaub, jimschaub@aol.com

Conference Chair 2002
StoryBoard Contest
Mary Lou Haynes, morgpk@aol.com

Conference Co-Chair 2002
Dave Daruszka

Web site:
http:/www.asifa.org/animate

E-mail: asifa@asifa.org

ASIFA/Central Conference:
April 26 - April 28, 2002

To contribute or volunteer contact:
Randy Rockafellow
E-mail: rrockafellow2@juno.com

To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

ASIFA in Annecy

All ASIFA members and prospective members are invited to attend and take an active role in the worldwide animation community. One of our tasks is to improve the communication between ASIFA Groups and ASIFA Board, the local chapters from US Northwest and Switzerland are preparing short presentations of their activities.

Topics to be addressed include objectives of the new board and updates on ASIFA projects, followed by a question and answer session and open networking time to greet old animation friends and meet new ones.

ASIFA Animation Art Auction

During the festival, the ASIFA booth will hold a silent auction of original animation art works from famous animators, including Bill Plympton (MUTANT ALIENS, in competion), Wendy Tilby and Amanda Forbis (WHEN THE DAY BREAKS, Annecy grand prix 1999), Georges Schwizgebel (past Annecy juror and exhibition artist), Don Hertzfeldt(REJECTED, in panorama and Oscar nominee) and other brilliant animators.

All proceeds will go toward the ASIFA production fund to finance new animation collaborations by ASIFA members. Please come to the ASIFA booth and make a bid on your favorite piece of art! Animators, if you are interested in making a donation of your artwork for future online and festival auctions, please speak to someone in the booth or contact jacksonhall@asifa.net The ASIFA Booth is located at the entrance of the room Eugene Verdun and will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

New edition of ASIFA News

At ANNECY 2001 Chris Robinson, the new editor of our printed magazine ASIFA NEWS will bring a package of the latest edition. It will be available at the ASIFA Booth.

Content:

* Letter from the new President by Abi Feijo
ASIFA's perspectives for the next 3 years

* In Brief
News from ASIFA chapters

* Peeling Limes: Various Persons Named Priit by Chris Robinson
Article about the famous Estonian animator

* The State of Independent Animation by Pierre HÈbert Analysis of contemporary tendencies

* Remembering Alison De Vere by Kayla Parker
In memoriam of the great artist from UK

* Upcoming Festivals
Festival Calendar for the next months

WEB PAGES FOR ASIFA MEMBERS

International ASIFA Members can have a link to ASIFA.NET or 10 MB free web-space for an initial fee of US$ 10

The ASIFA.NET homepage was up-dated on 1st and 21st May 2001, putting the ASIFA Member Pages and ASIFA Groups pages more in front.
<http://asifa.net>

Check it out.

Thomas Renoldner
Editor ASIFA.NET

Fantasia (Middleton) continued from 1

"The Wonderful World of Color/Disney" was hardly the movie of a generation before. Adding to the problem was an 80's reissue with a re-recorded soundtrack that, even with updated stereo sound, lacked the enthusiasm of the original deteriorating master recordings by Stokowski's Philadelphia Orchestra.

A 1991 "limited edition" on video was able to reconstruct the original music from the multiple channel recordings of the late 1930s; the images were restored from the master prints and the package made for a nice Christmas release.

With DVD, however, we are able to go even beyond the limitations of videotape and present far more material in a more convenient format. As a result, the newest issue of "Fantasia" and, with it, the documentary disk of "Fantasia Legacy" allows for a detailed study of this flawed masterpiece of animation from the Disney studios.

First of all, it reintroduces us to the "road show" version of "Fantasia," a lumbering beast that ran over 2 hours on its initial release. The discovery of the complete negative of Deems Taylor chatting away (so well parodied by Elmer Fudd in "Corny Concerto") came without the complete soundtrack, so a contemporary "voice actor" was employed to lip synch the narrative. Not that this adds a whole lot, since much of Taylor's presence was over-explaining the animation about to follow, but the restoration does provide a few interesting moments, as when the orchestra has problems with its tubular bells or when it bursts into applause after Mickey's performance in The Sorcerer's Apprentice.

Secondly, it gives a lot more credit to others whose conception art made several of the sequences possible. Oskar Fischinger, more often brushed aside in the traditional studio histories, not only gets a lot more credit (most likely due to the involvement of animator and historian John Canemaker) for his ideas in the Toccata and Fugue, but an excerpt of his "version" is presented from the extensive storyboard sketches he created (and, further, the DVD offers nearly the entire collection of storyboard images to study). Kay Nielsen's work and contribution is also extensively credited, especially for the layouts on 'Night on Bald Mountain'. In fact, each sequence has with it a complete library of development studies, test skeches, and rejected concepts.

Having the relative entirety of "Fantasia" available to watch and study also allows us the luxury of playing armchair quarterback with the film. The 'Pastorale' sequence, while a few seconds longer than even the 1991 video release, is still carefully cropped to eliminate the politically incorrect Black cupids (suddenly the image becomes very, very grainy); even with that, I feel it emerges as the least accomplished and most rushed-appearing portion of the film. Technical errors in the camerawork mar otherwise good shots, and at one point, the little winged horses fail to maintain the same color within the same shot. Ward Kimball, set to work on this sequence, stated he had disliked the experience since he would rather have been assigned to 'Dance of the Hours'. Unfortunately, that attitude shows in the final result. While what remains has several nice touches, its lackluster style (especially when compared to what preceeds and follows) saps the film of a lot of energy during its last half.

That much having been said, the "Fantasia" box set is a great way to utterly kill an entire weekend (with the multiple soundtracks and audio commentaries, I clocked in nearly 17 hours among the three disks). With the enhanced images, sound, and capacity for frame-by-frame study available in DVD technology, it was a valuable learning experience. And the dancing mushrooms are still cute.

– *Jim Middleton*
...hiding out at The Animating Apothecary
PO Box 1325 Battle Creek MI 49016
evolving website at
http://homestead.juno.com/jimmiddleton

ASIFA/Central Board Meeting 2001 *by Randy Rockafellow*

The annual board meeting was held Saturday April 28th, 2001 during our yearly members' retreat at Starved Rock Lodge. Here is a summary of the board meeting activities.

ASIFA/Central Volunteer Project Leaders gave reports on their activities as follows:

Deanna Morse gave a report on the treasury. We are about where we were a year ago, maybe a little lower. We still have a bank balance that supports our activities.

Randy Rockafellow gave a report on membership. Tom Brierton stepped down as Membership Coordinator and Randy Rockafellow took over membership responsibility.

Melissa Bouwman gave a report on the 2001 Annual Midwest Animators' Conference & Retreat. Overall she said things went pretty smoothly. Thanks goes out to Jim Middleton for providing our door prizes and lending his character design for ASIFA/Central material.

Jennifer Eldred, newsletter editor and vice-president, reported on her work in compiling and editing our quarterly newsletter "Frame by Frame." She invites anyone who wants to write articles or submit content to send or email the material to her at eldredj@usa.net

Randy Rockafellow, gave an overview of the activities with the web site. The web site has had many quiet content updates to the members, festival, and school directories.

New Business:
Dave Baker discussed his work on bringing an International Animation Festival to Kalamazoo, Michigan. He encouraged ASIFA/Central to help spread the word and let animators' know it is scheduled to happen the week May 11-17, 2002. Dave mentioned the possiblity of getting discounts for ASIFA/Central members and maybe a booth for our organization.

Randy Rockafellow announced some possibilites regarding updating and possibly moving the web site. The need to have the web site redesigned was also discussed. Getting students to take on the work was offered as a suggestion. A company offering the ability to add a database backend to the site had approached Randy. Which subsequently has proved to be too expensive a process for the organization to undergo. A panel was created to further discuss the future development and direction of the site. Deanna Morse, Jennifer Eldred, and Jim Middleton all volunteered to be part of the discussion.

Dave Daruska and Mary Lou Haynes made their pitch to move next year's conference closer to Chicago. What they presented was a spot at the Doubletree Guest Suites. Which promises more conference space, nearby shopping, nearby hiking trails, 2 pools and 2 jacuzis. Pretty much everything we've enjoyed about Starved Rock and then some. All for very comparable prices to what we spend at Starved Rock Lodge. The overwhelming positives had everyone on the board in agreement to move the 2002 Conference & Retreat to the Doubletree Suites.

The meeting was adjourned, and we headed off to the outdoor patio to enjoy our sunshine filled BBQ luncheon. During which Jim Middleton's door prizes were raffled off.

Our 10th Annual Midwest Animators Conference is scheduled for Friday Apr 26 - Sunday Apr 28, 2002 at the DoubleTree Guest Suites Downers Grove, Illinois. Everyone mark this date on your calendar then book your housing by calling: 1-800-222-8733.

See you there!

10th Annual Midwest Animators Conference

Friday Apr 26 - Sunday Apr 28, 2002

IMPORTANT REGISTRATION DATES
EARLY BIRD: Until Jan 1, 2002
ADVANCE: Jan 2 - Apr 1, 2002
LATE: Apr 26 -27, 2002

REGISTER NOW TO ENSURE YOUR SEAT!
ANIMATION CONFERENCE BROCHURE, REGISTRATION & CANCELLATION INFO, SCHEDULE, ALTERNATE LODGING LIST
Contact: Mary Lou Haynes
e-mail: morgpk@aol.com
SUBJECT: "10th Annual Animators Conference 2002"

FAX/WRITE US
Indicate "10th Annual Animators Conference 2002" or "Int'l Helen Victoria Haynes WORLD PEACE Storyboard & Animation Scholarship Competition"
Fax: 1-508-445-5924
Post: Send SASE to:
M. L. Haynes
PMB 324
3400 W. 111th Street
Chicago, IL. USA 60655

LODGING
DoubleTree Guest Suites, near I-355 & I-88, is near Morton Arboretum & Forest Preserves!
Accessible from both Chicago airports (O'Hare & Midway)! Please Request 'ASIFA / Central - Midwest Animators Conference'. Lodging fees are payable to DoubleTree Guest Suites.

RATES: $99. per night, Single / Double / Triple occupancy. $109. per night, Quadruple occupancy.
Suites: 2 Rooms, Kitchenette, 2 TVs, Sony Playstation, Data Port/Internet Access, Hair dryer!
Amenities: 2 Pools, Jacuzzis, Saunas, Fitness Center, Lounge, Restaurants, Local Shuttle, Parking, more!

Hotel: DoubleTree Guest Suites at Esplanade Conference & Fitness Center
Address: 2111 Butterfield Road,
Downers Grove, IL. USA 60515
Hotel Phone: 630 - 971 - 2000
Central Reservations: 1-800-222-8733
Fax: 1-630-971-1168
Web site: www.doubletree.com

Letter from the President

Another successfully relaxing, informative, inspiring weekend animators' conference has come and gone. Kudos to Jim Middleton and Deanna Morse for their presentations and for everyone else who shared their animation reels.

Of particular note is the CD's Jim handed everyone which was filled with public domain music. I've already started animating to Track #4 March from Traviata how about everyone else?

After David and Mary Lou's 2002 Animators' Conference/Retreat presentation I can't wait to head to the DoubleTree. It looks like it will shape up to be an great weekend and animation celebration for our 10th Annual Conference & Retreat. I might even decide to take the train and free shuttle service to avoid the not-so-fun drive.

Several things are underway, discussions about the future direction of the web site. Volunteers to help update the content on the web page as well as the web design are needed. So if you have web page design experience and want to help, email me. Discussions are also happening to help improve membership and the membership renewal process. Of note is the possibility of renewing for 2 or 3 years at a time.

Also we want to hear from our members. Write an article about animation that you've seen, animation festivals you've attended, and the animation projects you have or are working on.

Send articles to eldredj@usa.net. Send stills or links to animations of your work to share with our animation community to asifa@asifa.org.

-Randall Rockafellow

House of Mouse (Wilson) continued from page 1

in the park (like his first studio in California). We were given a rich history of Walt Disney, what he did during World War I, his early business ventures, and how he came up with Mickey Mouse. After the history lesson was over, we were driven to the Disney Institute for our painting test. We were given paint, brushes, cels with Steamboat Willie Mickey Mouse and modern day Mickey Mouse, and a diagram detailing what colors Mickey should be painted in. While we painted, everyone (including the tour guide) swapped stories about their favorite Disney movie, their first time at Disney World, and oh how nice it would be to work for Disney Feature Animation.

After the tour was over, we were taken back to Disney/MGM Studios and instructed that the painted cels would be mailed to us within one to two weeks once the paint dried.

The first tour went so well I decided to stay a little longer and see the other tour. This tour was about 20-30 minutes long. It encompassed several video screenings of the animation process as well as great moments in Disney animation history. What I particularly loved was the chance to talk (however briefly) with a couple of the animators who were there to draw sample characters and answer questions. Another real treat was seeing storyboards and example scenes from upcoming Disney/Pixar films including Monsters, Inc., Atlantis, Tarzan, and Lilo & Stitch. Opposite the storyboards was a set of windows that allowed people to look down at the animators as they worked on Disney's next feature film.

Based on what I saw on the computer screens, I'm really looking forward to Lilo and Stitch, the story of a little Hawaiian girl and her 'monster' friend. Yep, that's about all I was able to derive from the storyboards. Sorry folks, no spoilers to be found here.

The end of the second tour was inside a small museum room where the Disney Academy awards were displayed along with artwork, models, and prints from various films (Fantasia 2000 and Sleeping Beauty where on display when I was there, but the guide told me that the exhibits rotate on a regular basis).

One word of warning: The second tour exits into a gift shop where you can buy Disney animated film products--cels, prints, books, music, videos, statues, etc. Needless to say, they saw me coming a mile away! After spending way too much money in the gift shop, I went back to the conference. All the way I cursed the people who told me to go to Disney. They had been right all along. Dang.

That night, while I was dealing with my usual bout of insomnia, I surfed among the ten Disney channels piped into my room. At 2 a.m. they showed an episode of the Walt Disney World show from back in the '70's. The topic: Disney Feature Animation – a detailed history of the animation process including interviews with Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston and a very young looking upstart named Glen Keane. My Disney experience was complete!

- *Charles Wilson*

Calendar of Events 2001

World Animation Celebration
August 7-17,2001
www.wacfest.com
email: wacfest@aol.com

SIGGRAPH 2001
August 12-17,2001
www.siggraph.org/s2001

Ottawa Animation Festival
October 18-21, 2001
www.awn.com/ottawa

SUMMER 2001

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

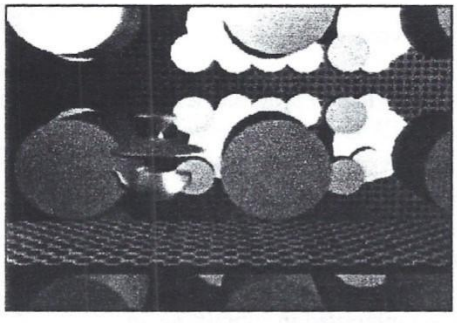
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

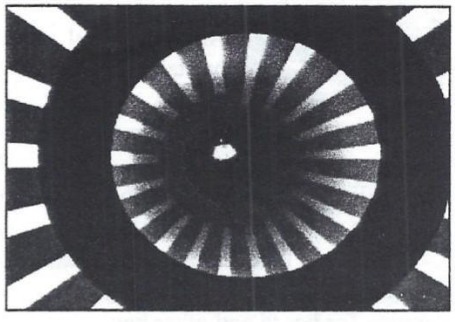
SUMMER 2001

Postmortem of my 3D animated film "Stuyvesant".

by Randall Rockafellow

Stuyvesant embodies the simple rule of life that at any moment life can happen and happen in a very unexpected and emotional way. The 3D animated film was brought to life starting back at the 9th annual ASIFA Animators' conference and retreat, April 2001. I didn't know it at the time but fellow ASIFA member Jim Middleton was to set the film in motion. During his presentation on Copyright law and the wonderful world of public domain music he handed out to the attendees a CD full of music recorded in 1920's or earlier. The music to be the inspiration for the film.





The CD first collected dust for a couple of weeks until I got my upgrade to discreets 3ds max 4. Around the begining of June I ripped the CD music to the .wav file format and imported it into 3ds max 4. From their it was I just animating straight-ahead and making up the basic scene and action as I went? There wasn't a storyboard or concept sketches I just wanted to fill action to the music. As I went along the story just worked itself into the piece. I figured the rough animation would be better than a storyboard for the type of simple film I had in mind. It

Stuyvesant (Rockafellow) continued on 9

Making of A DVD: DVD Premiere Party!

by Deanna Morse

We're in final production of a retrospective DVD of my film and video work. And we're planning the premiere party! You are all invited!

BACKGROUND

I've been in intensive production over the past several months. For me, it's been different production than my regular animated films. I was approached by Ed Anderson from Trillion Digital in Grand Rapids. MI (www.trilliondigital.com), who offered to compile and publish a retrospective of my film and video work on a DVD. Ed made this offer because he has seen me give public presentations of my video work, where I show slides, talk, and screen my short animation and experimental video pieces. Ed felt that DVD presentations, with their potential for interactivity would provide more flexibility, put all my media on one disc, and offer technically a higher quality viewing experience. He was also interested in having a piece that Trillion could use to showcase their DVD design and authoring talents. He offered to do it for free during times when the company was between clients. We've been working on this project on and off for about two and a half years.

Right now the project is in the final stretch - everything is in California, at the replicators, who are pressing the discs, putting in the cover insert, assembling the case with a 6 panel insert booklet, and shrink wrapping the whole thing. We're anticipating final delivery in two weeks.

MY FIRST STEPS

I dug in my shelves and closet, found the best copies of my films and videos, and arranged for transfer to beta. In two cases, on

Making of a DVD (Morse) continued on 3

Inside this Issue

Making of a DVD
Letter from the President
and more ...

Letter from the Editor *by Jennifer Eldred*

As summer draws to an end, it's time to get back to the business of connecting animators in the midwest. I admit of late that ASIFA/Central has taken a back burner, edged out by the lazy days of summer, but now as the weather turns cooler, it's time for ASIFA/Central members to take an active roll in their organization. One way is to take a moment and read the bios of the people who are running for board and other key positions in this organization. These bios start on page 5. An election ballot is also included in this edition. While there isn't much competition between board positions, you still have the right to cast a vote, so when you get your ballot, please send it in and let us know what you think.We are only as good as our most dedicated members and we are lucky to have very talented people interested in working for ASIFA/Central. That is exciting!

Cast your vote today!

I would also like to promote next year's ASIFA/Central Conference and Retreat. It is our 10th Annual and will be held from April 26-28, 2002. This conference is a very big deal. Check out the details on page 6.

If you are interested in submitting an article for the Fall 2001 edition the deadline is **October 15.**

Jennifer Eldred

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E-mail: asifa@asifa.org

ASIFA/Central Conference:
April 26 - April 28, 2002

To contribute or volunteer contact:
Randy Rockafellow
E-mail: rrockafellow2@juno.com

To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

The deadline for the Fall 2001 Edition of Frame by Frame is October 15, 2001.

Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

Loosemore Auditorium
DeVos Center on the
Grand Rapids Pew Campus
Grand Valley State University
401 West Fulton Street
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Parking: Watson lot behind Secchia Hall entrance on Winter St.

If you cannot make the party, but you want to purchase a DVD, send a check for $24. to Deanna Morse, School of Communications, 268 LSH, GVSU, Allendale, MI 49401. Please make check payable to Grand Valley State University.

email for more information: morsed@gvsu.edu

Deanna Morse is an artist/animator and a Professor in the School of Communications at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, MI. She has been producing films for some thirty years and he work is represented in a variety of collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She is currently treasurer of ASIFA/Central.

ASIFA/Central 2002 Board Position Nominees

Nomiee for President

Jim Middleton: I am tossing my drawing disc into the ring to run for president of ASIFA Central.

Animation, whether in its viewing or execution, has been one of my primary sources of solace since attempting my first film at age 13. I have been fortunate to be a member of ASIFA since 1984, and my life has been enriched by the friendships and associations I have made since then. I have found methods of expressing my training as a pharmacist into the language of animation, to my personal delight, if to the occasional confusion of pharmacists (not a group known for flights of fancy), and with no further stimulation to the nervous system than caffeine. Lots of caffeine.

My goals for ASIFA Central are to continue its role as advocate for animation and to promote the exposure of the amazing work being created by its members. Whether this is done by newsletter articles, seminars, retreats, or festivals will depend on available resources; the ASIFA Central website is an incredible resource that deserves our continued support and interactive participation. Increasing the exposure of membership's efforts can only stimulate further interest in animation in general, and in ASIFA Central in particular. With these destinations in sight, we will continue to grow, have greater interaction among members, learn from our technical misadventures, and share the plain, flat-out fun borne by those bitten by the animation bug.

Bio: Jim Middleton, pharmacist, instructor, and animator, has been imbedded in the Surreal City of Battle Creek long enough to remember when it actually made corn flakes. He has produced over a dozen animated shorts that have earned international recognition and has been involved in productions for the Chicago Sports Channel, A & E, and local cable networks. Presently he is at work on two animation projects, one of them actually representing a paycheck. He consults for several psychiatric health organizations and teaches pharmacology to the bewildered nursing and dental hygiene students at Kellogg Community College. Anyone spending more than 12 minutes at his home will be forced to see some of his animation. He has been quoted as saying, "If the future doesn't have cookies, I don't want to go." We think he drinks too much coffee.

Nominee for Vice President & Newsletter Editor

Jennifer Eldred: I am the current Vice President and Newsletter Editor for ASIFA/Central and would like to continue in my current roles through 2002.

I have been an ASIFA/Central member since 1995 and Newsletter Editor and Vice President since 1997. My goals over the coming year are to take the newsletter online to electronic publication for our online members. As Vice President I will remain an active voice either through publication or direct correspondence with the President. I have every intention of seeing ASIFA/Central grow and prosper in 2002.

As an animator, I have created several children's animation pieces. I currently work as a New Media Designer and Project Manager for C2 Media Production Group in Grandville, Michigan.

Nominee for Webmaster

Charles Wilson: Location: East Lansing, Michigan; Years in ASIFA: 2

INTERNET EXPERIENCE: Website and e-

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commerce site designer/ programmer since1996. Experienced in HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Java, CGI, Perl, C/C++, Lotus Domino, ActiveX, JPEG/Gif89a, Macromedia Flash and Macromedia Director/ShockWave. Currently engaged in advanced study of the following technologies for my day job: XML, DHTML, IBM WebSphere.

ENHANCEMENTS THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MADE TO OUR CURRENT ASIFA CENTRAL WEBSITE

When reviewing our current website, I evaluated it from the following perspectives:

1. When I look at the site, what reasons can I come up with that would make me want to join ASIFA Central?
2. If I'm a member of ASIFA Central, how can this website help me grow as an artist and foster a sense of community among animators?
3. If I'm going to become a corporate sponsor, what are the benefits that sponsorship will hold for my company?

I came up with the following answers:

FUNCTIONAL CHANGES

1. Add online animation discussion forums covering various topics (techniques, current events, film reviews.
2. Need shorter site update time when member material is received.
3. Must make it easier to navigate through the website and find relevant information.
4. When I enter www.asifa.org into a web browser, the browser is automatically redirected to www.swcp.com. This shouldn't happen. It will confuse visitors and give the impression that our site is unavailable for technical reasons.

CONTENT

1. I want to display more artwork, animations, and articles from ASIFA Central members.
2. I want to archive all frame-by-frame newsletters and make them available in PDF format on the website.
3. Weekly updates as to what's going on in the animation community would be nice (festival info, animated movie openings, DVD releases, etc).
4. We need resources to help animators (links to relevant sites--copyright info, unions, book reviews, colleges, animation tools/software/art supplies.

I'm still working on how to make the site more alluring for corporate sponsors, but that will be a good challenge for after I've tackled the first eight tasks.

From what you've read, I hope that everyone believes that I'm the right man for the job. But even if you choose someone else, I've got lots of ideas, technical experience, and the desire to hear everyone's ideas on how to make ASIFA Central an example for the other ASIFA chapters to follow. I would appreciate the opportunity to manage our website, but I will be just as happy being a valuable resource for the person you do choose for the job.

Thank you,
Charles

Nominee for Member Directory Coordinator
Randall Rockafellow

Randall Rockafellow is a freelance 3D animator through his company Rock-A-Fellow Media. In addition he serves as a part-time instructor at the College for Creative Studies. Attended his first ASIFA Central Animatorsí Conference in 1997 and soon thereafter took over webmaster duties for ASIFA Central. In 2000 Randy became the current President. Randy is filling in as the Member Directory Coordinator left vacant at 2001 Conference.

Nominee for Treasurer
Deanna Morse

I would like to run for Treasurer of ASIFA/Central.I have served as Treasurer for the past several years, and formerly as President and Membership Chairperson (for somewhat over a decade). In addition, I served a three-year term on the international ASIFA board.

My goals for ASIFA/Central are to support and maintain the level of involvement that we have at present. We have an active website, which, as the first ASIFA site on the web continues to receive much attention. Our annual retreat is a great weekend of camaraderie, networking and education.

Our newsletter provides tangible information about the organization, and is a valuable benefit for our members. All of this serves to maintain a midwest USA presence in ASIFA.

As treasurer and board member, I will help to support these activities. As treasurer, I will keep a balanced budget for our group.

Bio: An artist specializing in animation and personal short films and videos, Deanna Morse has produced over thirty films and videos since the early

Nominees continued on 7

Making of a DVD (Morse) continued from 1

old films, I replaced the original music tracks, to use cleared and legal music.

This first step was a bit difficult. Since I am continually in production, at various stages on a few projects, it was hard to think that my newer work wouldn't be included. It was difficult to think of having to make a "stopping point" with my films. In the past, I had made a few video compilations, but these always seemed more fluid. I could add a title, delete a title, reorganize my work. It was difficult to have to commit to the finality of putting the work on a mastered DVD. I hurried to finish two projects for inclusion. We ended up creating some new material just for the DVD: an overview table of contents, and a "signature" piece with time-lapse of animation intercut with the final films segments.

During the production, I worked closely with Trillion employee (and ASIFA/Central member) Eric Oehrl. Eric set deadlines, kept the project moving, and did the encoding and authoring for the DVD. He brought in graphic designer Grey Christian (Grey/Berlin Design Studio) to design the interface. I recently realized that Eric was serving as producer, although when we were in production, it felt like collaboration. (This is probably the mark of a good producer!)

I began thinking about how to organize thirty years of films and videos for the DVD. I made a notecard for each title, and juggled the stacks to try to find common threads or themes.

We ended up including 36 short films, over two hundred production stills with captions, five storyboard to film comparisons, and interactive and animated motion menus. The total video running time is over 2 1/2 hours.

We ended up not including my dance-film collaborations, a few shorts, and some early work.

INTERFACE METAPHOR

We decided to use the desktop metaphor to help visually organize the films. The films are grouped into 8 sections: Fun Shorts!, More Fun Stuff!, Dreams and Visions, Handspeak, Early Films, Visual Poems, Commercial Stuff and Introduction. Each of these has little objects or drawings to represent it.

These are spread over what appears to be a very large cluttered artists' desk. In the center is the main menu, with a clipboard list for each of the areas. If the clipboard was the actual size, the desk would be at least 20 feet long. Now that would be a good animator1s work space!

Grey and Eric scanned many objects and images from the films, and cleaned up the edges in Photoshop. Grey resized and placed the objects, added shadows and basically built the huge and cluttered virtual desktop. The desktop has is a bit like my desk: with papers, drawings, shells, leaves, trinkets, and souvenirs.

Later, Eric drew highlight boxes around objects on the desktop which defined the areas for interactivity, and programmed it so that the viewer could jump from choice to choice, from film to film, from section to section.

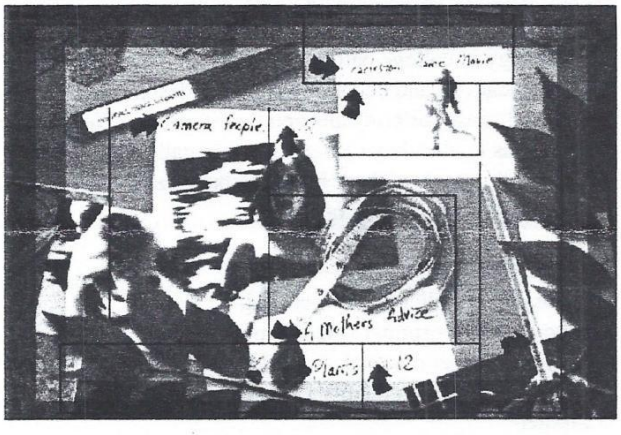
TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience is educators and students who want to learn or teach animation. A primary goal of the project is that viewers will see that anyone can animate, using simple tools, if they just have the patience to do it. It does not take a giant company with teams of folks and big budgets to speak with this medium.

The DVD includes four films with "angles": a technical possibility unique to DVDs. In these four films, the viewer can press the angle button on their DVD remote controller to toggle between the original storyboard and the finished animation.

More than half of the films include production stills with captions: behind the scenes comments on how the work was produced and animated.

My films include many collaborative efforts. There is work made with school children when I was an Artist in the Schools in South Carolina, films made with other artists, there



are shorts animated for children and for Sesame Street. There are many personal film shorts. Somewhat like visual poems, my films explore place, dreams, and memories. It's a wide variety of work. Some has been screened in museums, some in festivals, some on public television, some on commercial and cable television.

There are several animation techniques represented in my work: cut-out, cel, model animation, computer supported animation, and 3-D animation. The experimental films include documentary approaches and optical printing. The production stills/captions often describe challenges or elements distinctive to working in these various techniques.

THE SURPRISES

I was surprised by the animations that Grey came up with to enhance the interface.

My animations often use cut-out and object animation. Grey was a computer animator, but he had never worked with traditional methods. At one point in the scanning,

Making of a DVD (Morse) continued on 4

Making of a DVD (Morse) continued from 3

inspired by my under-the-camera animations, he decided to do an object animation himself, and he twirled a doll in a box: move-click-move-click. Eric, Grey and I were delighted by how alive it was, and thought we should include it on the DVD as a surprise. Later, Grey decided to make little surprises for each section. The animation of these was so fun that we didn't want to hide them, so we foregrounded these in each section. Eric suggested adding an audio bed that included matched sound for these animations. Over this summer, we worked to add audio elements to each of the desktop animations.

Adding the audio brought a new set of surprises for me. I had seen several DVDs that had annoying sound tracks on their menus. I decided that I wanted to use nature sounds and bird noises as the background audio bed. Sound designer Joe McCargar (from River City Studios) offered to assist me with digitizing and building these audio elements. The first day I went to work with him, I played some of the tracks, and he surprised me by naming the birds, "Oh, there's a Robin. A Flicker. Cardinal." It turns out that Joe had studies Ornithology in college before changing his major to Communications and becoming an audio designer! He had a wonderful sense for bird calls and their timings. We designed the sections to each have a highlight bird call on it. Astute birders will recognize these highlight birds as they wander through my oversize desktop!

TECHNICAL PROCESS

The basic step of this DVD included:

- Generating the original video/film materials
- Cleaning up that material as needed, technical fixes
- Transferring to high quality video for encoding into the computer
- Organizing the material into sections: determining all elements of the final project
- Developing a bit budget for the project (how much material, what size disc is required)
- Encoding the video from analog to digital
- Scanning slides and graphics for the production stills
- Scanning storyboards for the "angles"
- Laying storyboards to video, matching timing with finished production
- Designing the interface
- Generating the visual elements of the interface, scanning and cleaning up those elements
- Production of the graphic interface (including layout, resizing, adding shadows)
- Grant writing to support the costs of commercial replication
- Writing captions for the production stills
- Testing captions, and production stills
- Determining the interactivity.
- Programming the interactivity.
- Programming other elements: angles, captions, chapter stops.
- Testing the discs for bugs and errors.
- Transferring all materials to DLT for replication.
- Designing the DVD disc graphic.
- Writing and designing the booklet for insert.
- Writing and designing the cover for the disc package.
- Planning for the Premiere Celebration Party.

THE HOME STRETCH

When the DVD was initiated, we had thought about pressing only one copy for me to use in presentations. But it turned out that with this quantity of material, when Eric did a "bit budget", the movies wouldn't fit at high quality. So we decided to go for a commercial pressing, and I began some grant writing to support it. I received funding from my University, and Digital Video Services in Grand Rapids, Michigan (www.dvs.cc) offered me a nice discount that allowed us to undertake the commercial pressing.

In the most positive spirit of collaboration, this project for me felt like many people came to it with the best they had to offer: they shared their art, they shared their skills, they shared their strengths. I feel honored by their gifts, and the final DVD, I feel, reveals this positive energy.

Only a few people have seen the test discs. The response to this project has been overwhelmingly positive. When you rent a DVD from the video store, you just put it in and it "plays", but this project is different. With the many choices, and short films, it is by nature INTERACTIVE. The viewer makes choices, selects what s/he wants to explore.

The motion menus make the desktop come alive. You feel that you are in an animated world, with nature and bird sounds surrounding you, and surprising little elements on the desktop come alive. But the experience feels grounded in reality: the elements look physical, the desktop looks like a desktop, the objects look real.

For me, this DVD is a wonderful gift. It has it's own life: it created an animated and interactive world for my animations to live in.

The disc is currently in replication . In a few weeks we will have them, ready for the premiere. You can own one for only $24.! ($20. + $4 shipping and handling). Proceeds from the sales will go into a scholarship fund at my University.

And - we're having a DVD Debut party! If you are near Michigan, mark your calendars:

DVD Debut Party for the premiere of move-click-move Animated and Experimental Films by Deanna Morse

Thursday, November 15, 2001
6:30 Program
7:30 -9:00 Reception

Making of a DVD (Morse) continued on 5

Stuyvesant (Rockafellow) continued from 1

ended up working well as a launching point for the next round

The film was produced in much the same way you write a paper. I roughly animated all the shots to the music without doing complex modeling; surfacing and lighting beyond the defaults which resulted in a rough draft. Next I took all the shots into a non-linear editor and put all the shots together to get a feel for the over-all film. Here's where I made decisions on what shots to keep and which ones needed to be reworked. At this stage I felt I had accomplished a lot and got a glimmer at what the final product was going to be. It also was less daunting to work with rough shots then to begin and create entire new shots from the ground up. The other thing that helped me to finish the film was a looming June 29th deadline for the SEMAFX film festival (learn more about SEMAFX at semafx.com). I am the type of person that needs the motivation of a due date to really produce and 3 days before the due date I really turned it on. The last three days were mostly surfacing and lighting. The scenes really came to life once the models were surfaced and with lighting to the depth and mood to the piece. I was happy with how it all came together on the last days of the project.

The end result is a fun muscial cartoony romp that sweeps up the audience and carries them swiftly til then end of the minute long musical adventure. I enjoy the film because all the 3D we see today has incredibly complex worlds and characters all pushing a surreal reality and "Stuvesant" is a dose of something different. The only drawback as a filmmaker of a finished film is that envitable you always notice minor glitches or annoyances that werenít clear until after it was done. But I suppose when your not satisfied that's how you know your ready to make another film.Currently I am submitting the film to various film festivals to share ìStuyvesantî with others.

Randall Rockafellow is the current ASIFA Central President. He does freelance animation through his company Rock-A-Fellow Media and is a part-time instructor for Center for Creative Studies, Detroit, Michigan. Contact him at rrockafellow2@juno.com

Calendar of Events 2001-2002

Ottawa Animation Festival
October 18-21, 2001
www.awn.com/ottawa

ASIFA/Central
Conference & Retreat
April 26-28, 2002
http:/www.asifa.org/animate

In Remembrance of Lily Brierton

Dear Friends:

I am writing to let you all know that on Saturday, Sept. 1, my lovely wife Lily passed away from complications due to pancreatic cancer. She died peacefully, in my arms, surrounded by her loved ones and family. She had been diagnosed with diabetes last October, but her cancer wasn't officially diagnosed until the middle of June. As you all were acquainted with her through ASIFA, I wanted to let you all know.

Lily was a wonderful woman, and was loved by many people; more people than I ever thought. I have been inundated with e-mails, cards, and letters letting me know how her kindness, unconditional love for others, infectious laughter and smile touched so many. I will miss her dearly. She is now an angel in heaven, watching over me as I live out the rest of my own life, til it comes time for me to join her.

Tom Brierton

If you would like to send Tom a letter or card of condolence please address it to:

2418 W. Coyle
Chicago, IL. 60645

Durango Film Festival

The second Durango Film Festival will take place in the historic Rocky Mountain town of Durango, Colorado, March 1-10, 2002.

Further information, application forms and rules for entry can be found at
http://www.durangofilmfestival.com/

FALL 2001

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

FALL 2001

ASIFA/Central Election Results

by Deanna Morse

I have to say that I was very excited when I saw the list of candidates who came forward for this election to the ASIFA Central board. I think I actually said "Yee Haw!" out loud.

We have two brand new board members: Our new president, Jim Middleton, and our new Webmaster, Charles Wilson. We have three returning board members: Jennifer Eldred continues our newsletter, Randy Rockafellow continues with membership, and I continue as treasurer. And a former board member who has always been active with the organization, Mary Lou Haynes, has jumped back "on board".

It is a tribute to the strength of our chapter to have member involvement like this: we have sustained and returning, mixed with the new!

Not all chapters have such fortune in finding eager volunteers. One international chapter had trouble getting someone to commit to be President, so they made it a rotating position, where it just moves from member to member - each year a new leader, determined by your alphabetical order. Your last name starts with the letter A?, then you're in charge! (I haven't heard how well this worked out...)

Every time I travel to international festivals, other ASIFA members tell me how envious they are of our yearly retreat. I was just at SAFO and SAS, and three separate people told me, on three different days, how they wished their chapter could organize a similar event. For us, it provides an opportunity to reconnect, to party, to share ideas, animations, sit around the campfire and tell scary stories, and meet new animators, to make new friends. We have fun doing it, and our reputation precedes us. OK. We have a chapter that knows how to party. I'll celebrate that!

Thanks to all the new board members, and all the animators and friends of animation in ASIFA for your continued support!

Some Random Thoughts Regarding the Legality of Animation

by Charles Wilson

Working as an independent animator, I hold down a day job as a software engineer. This allows me the freedom to work as a forensic animator and produce my own films during my spare time. In the rough and tumble world of the software industry, it becomes extremely important to protect yourself and your outside interests. This fact was driven home when I was introduced to "The Contract." Contracts go by many names: employee agreement, statement of expectations, etc. However you spell it, it's a contract that can allow people access to all your hard work even if it is performed on your own time with your own equipment.

When I was planning to move back to Michigan, I happened to interview at three software companies in one day. At the second company, I knew that the interview was over when I asked this question:

"I work on personal projects in my spare time. Right now I'm working on a short animated film and a video game. I also write technical articles for trade publications. I work on these projects with my own equipment and on my own time. When the project is finished, who does it belong to?"

"It belongs to us," he said. The meaning was clear. All my work was company property.

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Legality of Animation
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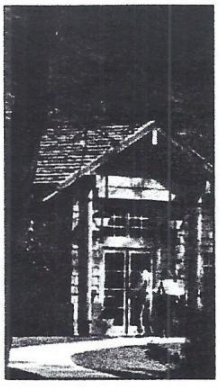
Letter from the Editor *by Jennifer Eldred*



Congratulations to the new and returning ASIFA/Central leadership and board. Once again it was great to see so many people interested in helping the association thrive!

On a personal note, thank you for allowing me to continue as Vice President and Newsletter editor throught 2002. To submit articles, reviews, project updates and artwork for the 2002 newsletters, please send them via email to eldredjb@hotmail.com

With 2002 we welcome a new President in Jim Middleton. Jim has been a visible and memorable face in the ASIFA/Central family for several years and it is great to see him at the helm. With Jim's guidance and spirit, it should be a very productive year for ASIFA/Central.

Aside from the election and quarterly newsletter, your next chance to share your input will be at our Annual Conference and Retreat. It is the 10th Annual and will be held from April 26-28, 2002. We welcome all animator's and animation enthusiast to attend. See page 5 for details.

If you are interested in submitting an article for the Fall 2002 edition the deadline is **January 15.**

Happy Holidays!

Jennifer Eldred

Animation Scholarship Available

Each year, the Haynes Storyboard & Animation Scholarship program awards a $1,000 grant to one qualified student attending an accredited college or university by sponsoring a Storyboard Competition.

The money, contributed by the family & friends of the late Helen Victoria Haynes - former bilingual teacher, musician and church activist - defrays the cost of producing an animated PSA based on the theme 'How We Can Achieve World Peace'.
College students anywhere in the world are eligible. The deadline for applying with a Storyboard is **March 15, 2002.**

Winner will be announced in April. Winner is required to complete the PSA for screening at the 11th Annual Midwest Animators Conference in April 2003.

For an application with rules, send an email containing your postal address to: Program Director, HVH World Peace Storyboard & Animation Scholarship Competition morgpk@aol.com

ASIFA/Central Mission Statement
ASIFA: Association Internationale du Film d' Animation

The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. – adopted 3/92

ASIFA/*Central* Volunteers and Project Leaders

Newsletter Designer/Editor & Vice President
Jennifer Eldred, eldredjb@hotmail.com

President
Jim Middleton
http://homestead.juno.com/jimmiddleton

Webmaster
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Smudge_Anim@yahoo.com

Membership Coordinator
Randall Rockafellow
rrockafellow2@juno.com

Treasurer
Deanna Morse, morsed@gvsu.edu

Reel Coordinator
Jim Schaub, jimschaub@aol.com

Conference Chair 2002
StoryBoard Contest
Mary Lou Haynes, morgpk@aol.com

Conference Co-Chair 2002
Dave Daruszka

Web site:
http:/www.asifa.org/animate

E-mail: asifa@asifa.org

ASIFA/Central Conference:
April 26 - April 28, 2002

To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

SAFO and SAS

by Deanna Morse

Writer's note: I recently attended the Teacher's Symposium at the Student Animation Festival of Ottawa (SAFO) and also the Society for Animation Studies (SAS) Conference in Montreal. Here's a report from those two events.

SAFO is scheduled on alternate years of the Ottawa Animation Festival, a festival that many ASIFA Central folks have attended. SAFO is held at the Archives, and is a much smaller event. Programming was similar to the Ottawa fests, but (of course) aimed at students. There were a number of school spotlight reels, late night competition screenings, several Panorama screenings, retrospectives, workshops.

Here are some highlights: a puppet seminar with Mike Belzer, an animator who worked on projects including: *Nightmare Before Christmas*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Gumby*, and Pillsbury Doughboy Ads. He gave an excellent multimedia presentation with lots of details about the challenges and solutions to working on these shows. Wedding veils and spray starch were used to create ice floes in *James*, and we learned a lot about animation tie-downs: the screws through the characters' feet that keep them from falling over.

Maureen Furniss presented thoughtful opening comments at the Teacher's Symposium. Several of us asked her for a copy, and now they are published on the email list at www.animationjournal.com It's a bit hard to find: go in the archive, it's message number 1201.

The competition films were strong and varied. For me, the programming started too late (9pm), and I was disappointed that I had seen several of the titles in the School Spotlight reels.

There were also several industry and education panels that I attended. I found some repetitive, and all a bit depressing as the animation industry is experiencing such a slump. The primary message was that beginning animators should research the company they want to apply for and target their application with that company in mind. Start out as an intern, work your way up to production assistant. Most of the jobs now are in television: storyboard, and background artist. Many people recommended the new book *Producing for Animation* (from Focal Press).

The Society for Animation Studies Conference is held on different continents and locations. It's a small group, mostly animation historians. People present half hour papers, followed by usually lively and spirited questions and discussion. I previewed my new DVD and discussed some of the challenges of working in that platform.

There were site visits to the Cinematheque Quebecoise, where we toured facilities and had a private showing of an excellent exhibit on animation history.

The first day of the conference, we had an inspiring day at the National Film Board of Canada. In the afternoon, we toured animation studios and saw new films and works in progress from NFB animators. Our tour was supposed to last two hours, but we were still meeting and talking with people two hours after that.

Some of the exciting projects were: new puppet animation by Co Hoedman, new pinscreen work from Jacques Drouin, and a 3D animation requiring glasses by Munro Ferguson and Paul Morstad. The most unusual demonstration was by John Weldon. He constructed floppy puppets of just heads and clothing (no armatures) animated them flat on a black background, used a digital camera to take stills, and brought them into After Effects to add shadows and compositing.

Apparently every year the NFB offers such a tour day following the Ottawa Festival. Several folks said they plan to come back every year for this special event. It was definitely a day well spent.

- Deanna Morse
morsed@gvsu.edu
http://faculty.gvsu.edu/morsed

Legality of Animation Wilson) continued from 1

There was a note of finality in his voice. One that I had heard before. I knew that arguing the point was a waste of time. Needless to say, I couldn't get out of that building fast enough.

I'm sure that everyone has heard horror stories (or maybe just rumors) about the restrictive contracts that Disney has used in the past in order to protect their trademarks and intellectual property. Or as Bill Plympton put it: "Years later after I had been nominated for an Oscar, the Disney company got back to me with a very generous offer. Unfortunately the contract was the sticking point. Negotiations with Disney is not so much good-cop, bad-cop. It's more like bad-cop, antichrist." No matter what the Disney corporation's intent was, it was a restrictive contract that helped spoil the deal.

In order to protect myself from these situations, I've insisted that the following paragraph be included in every "employment agreement" that I sign. And if the employer won't agree to this paragraph, then I walk away from the job, no matter how good the opportunity appears to be. There are no exceptions.

ARTWORK: Any artistic ventures (animation, 2D/3D artwork, works of fiction/non-fiction, etc.) created by the employee shall not be bound by this employment agreement so long as said artistic ventures are not created for the employer or employer-related business. The employee understands that all artistic ventures shall be performed during non-work hours. Furthermore, all artistic ventures shall be created without using any employer-owned equipment unless previously agreed upon by the employer and employee on a case-by-case basis.

It is airtight? Probably not. Would it hold up in a court of law? I really don't know since I've never had to rely upon it. But when you're standing in front of a judge and it's your word against your employer's, at least you can show the judge that there was a statement of understanding between you and your employer regarding the projects you work on outside of business hours. If I am facing a choice between using this paragraph to protect me and relying upon the honesty of employers then there is no decision. Not every employer out there is a crook but not every employer has your best interests at heart. Take the time to protect yourself from litigation. If you have the opportunity, find a lawyer who specifies in copyright law and talk to them. It may be an old cliché but it's true: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

In the next issue of Frame-by-Frame, I'll discuss a little of what I have learned about American copyright law and more importantly where you can obtain more information about this important subject.

Charles Wilson is an independent animator and the owner of "Smudge Animation" an animation firm that specializes in forensic animation, accident simulation/reconstruction, and short films for legal cases.

The Animator's Survival Kit

by Deanna Morse

Richard Williams has been successfully animating for a lifetime, garnering an average of one award every month for 25 years, winning two Oscars, an Emmy, and other significant international awards. He is best known as the lead animator on "*Roger Rabbit.*"

For the past 6 years, he has been sharing his knowledge in a series of traveling seminars, *"The Richard Williams' Animation Masterclass".*

I had heard about rave reviews of these seminars from other animators. Two springs ago, I traveled to L.A. to participate in the three day seminar, and to become another convert.

Lucky for you, Richard Williams is publishing a book including the seminar material. Here's the title: *"The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion and Internet Animators."*

I've received an advance copy, and it looks great! There are chapters on Walks, Funs, Jumps and Skips, Anticipation, Weight, Flexibility, Directing.... and just a lot of nuts and bolts basics about basic problems that face character animators. It's beautifully illustrated, in fact at least half of the book is made up of examples, sketches, and illustrations.

It's published by Faber and Faber in the UK, and according to the ASIFA San Francisco newsletter, the tentative price is $30 for paperback and $50 for hardcover, and the tentative date for publication is next March.

Keep your eyes peeled at area bookstores for this wonderful resource!
- Deanna Morse

10th Annual Midwest Animators Conference

Friday Apr 26 - Sunday Apr 28, 2002

IMPORTANT REGISTRATION DATES
ADVANCE: Oct 1, 2001 - March 1, 2002
LATE: Apr 26 -27, 2002

REGISTER NOW TO ENSURE YOUR SEAT!
ANIMATION CONFERENCE BROCHURE, REGISTRATION & CANCELLATION INFO, SCHEDULE, ALTERNATE LODGING LIST
Contact: Mary Lou Haynes
e-mail: morgpk@aol.com
SUBJECT: "10th Annual Animators Conference 2002"

FAX/WRITE US
Indicate "10th Annual Animators Conference 2002" or "Int'l Helen Victoria Haynes WORLD PEACE Storyboard & Animation Scholarship Competition"
Fax: 1-508-445-5924
Post: Send SASE to:
M. L. Haynes
PMB 324
3400 W. 111th Street
Chicago, IL. USA 60655
Email: asifaconf@hotmail.com
Voice mail: 773-233-1017

LODGING
DoubleTree Guest Suites, near I-355 & I-88, is near Morton Arboretum & Forest Preserves! Accessible from both Chicago airports (O'Hare & Midway)! Please Request 'ASIFA / Central - Midwest Animators Conference'. Lodging fees are payable to DoubleTree Guest Suites.

RATES: $99. per night, Single / Double / Triple occupancy. $109. per night, Quadruple occupancy.
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Letter from the New President for 2002

I wanted to pass on my thanks to the ASIFA membership for so kindly placing its trust in me for the ASIFA Central presidency. It is truly flattering to be so honored by people for whom I feel such respect. My association with this group has been one of the most heartwarming and fulfilling I have ever experienced, and I hope to do the role of president justice.

I hope to do everything possible to promote student activities and festivals for the area, and this upcoming Spring Retreat will be followed with a Kalamazoo-based animation festival that will offer workshops and opportunities for ASIFA involvement.

And of course, there'll have to be door prizes at the retreat! Warning to all planning to attend -- I've been hitting garage sales again! Feel free to cattle prod me at will, stop by if you're in the neighborhood, email or call.

For the next year, you've got yourself a new puppy! Thanks again for your kind thoughts and encouragement.

- Jim Middleton

http://homestead.juno.com/jimmiddleton

SPRING 2002

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

SPRING 2002

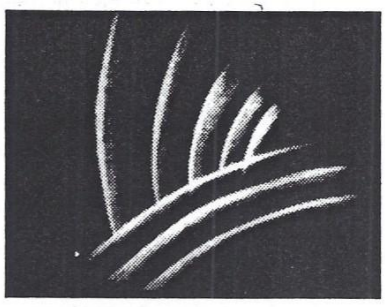
Cross-Influence in Abstract German Animation of the Silent Era

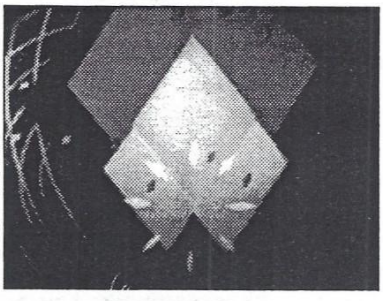
by Jim Middleton

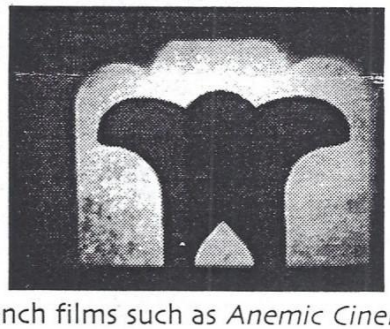
Author's note: These notes represent some random comments based on a presentation at the Starved Rock Retreat in April, 2000. There might be a germ of a thesis for some aspiring MFA candidate here, too.

When exploring the evolution of Animation (with a capital A) as an Art, we need not look far into the development of the genre to fall upon some striking examples. The earliest extant specimens, by their basic nature, were replete with abstraction, and by the mid-1920s, the visuals had coalesced into a screen language that had a distinct Germanic flavor. It is understandable, therefore, that artists shared their enthusiasm and cross-pollinated each other's works. Ultimately, their influence made its way to America, where the styles were adopted to the tastes of not only commercial animation, but narrative cinema as well.

The simple line-drawings of Emile Cohl were a by-product of his Absurdist school of art from the 19th century. *Fantasmagorie* (1906), his first film, blended one dreamlike image into another within its sixty-second screen time. His subsequent films were often stream-of-consciousness rambles that explored drug-induced fantasy (*Le Reve d'un Garcon du café*) and odd character juxtapositions (*Le Retapeur-de cervelles*). Later, other







French films such as *Anemic Cinema* or *Ballet Mechanique* tossed in abstract visuals amid unrelated images (hats, bottles, pouting lips, fitful animations of Charlie Chaplin) in an attempt to explore visual technique at the expense of narrative continuity.

In the United States, early films by J. Stuart Blackton at Edison also toyed with abstract imagery, but only as a method of film illusion. *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* (1907) has some blurred sketches that evolve into les visages grotesques, but that appeared to be less an attempt to

Abstract German Animation (Middleton) continued on 4

Inside this Issue

Letter from the President and more ...

Greetings from the President *by Jim Middleton*

The ASIFA Central retreat and conference is approaching in a few weeks, KAFI in May and as if that isn't enough, there are taxes! Fortunately, software is a valid business expense, not merely a way of life. For those of you on my email spam list, you've already been teased ad nauseam with the door prizes that will be looking for a home at the retreat—and since we're always in the need for space to fill, let's iterate the goods at this juncture.

And note all the ART involved here!
- A 1964 Viennese Weekly ART Calendar. OK, so it's 38 years old, but there are purty pitchers and it represents the year that the Addams Family and the Munsters premiered, It's A Small World debuted at the New York World's Fair, and BASIC ran the IBM system 360, a computer the size of a large upright freezer with all the power of a good calculating wristwatch of today.
- The ART of the New Yorker 1925-1995
- 102 Favorite Paintings by Norman Rockwell
- Jerry Beck's 50 Greatest Cartoons...6 copies!
- An ART Nouveau Coloring Book
- Walt Disney's Animated Characters...2 copies!
- Snow White-- an ART in its Making!
- The Adventures of Aaron, and a load of comic books, both new and "well loved." Aaron Warner, a Battle Creek comic strip artist, ran a taco restaurant in downtown Battle Creek for a year before figuring that it might not be the most logical affiliation for his talents. So he liquidated. He had lots of comic books.
- Rocko's Modern Christmas Video
- A 3-volume set of Simpsons Episodes
- Walt Disney's Bambi ART Book
- Michael Barrier's Hollywood Cartoons -- a hefty book of anecdotes, explored in the last issue of Frame by Frame
- Cartoon Crazys DVD -- the joy of public domain animation now hits mediocre digital transfers! (There's also a copy of R. Crumb's Coffee Table ART Book in the collection, but that's definitely not for the faint of heart.)

Oh! And....and....Volume II of "Animate THIS!" -- yet another collection of public domain musical selections gleaned and cleaned from prehistoric sources (forget vinyl, we're talking SHELLAC here, gang).

Wow! How do these things come to be available? Well, there's a recession on (don't we know THAT) and outlet malls think books are passe. So out they go! I collect 'em, sort 'em, and share 'em. But you've got to make it to the retreat to get 'em! So carpool, hitch, or email yourself to Chicago. I can't take these back with me, and if I leave them in the hands of non-animators it will just herniate the right side of their cerebrums. And that's not a pretty sight.

And then, after THAT, we've got Kalamazoo in May...and Ottawa in October...and before you know it...MORE TAXES!

One more thing, and I'll let our ever-suffering Jennifer try to put this ramble into small enough type to fit...at the retreat, BRING YOUR IDEAS FOR OUR WEB SITE. We're looking at ways to make the site more useful, appealing, and FUN. Have a favorite link? Bring it! Want your registry information updated? Pontificate! Is puce your favorite color? Well, we have therapy for that one...

See you soon!
Yr hmbl typst,
Jim Middleton

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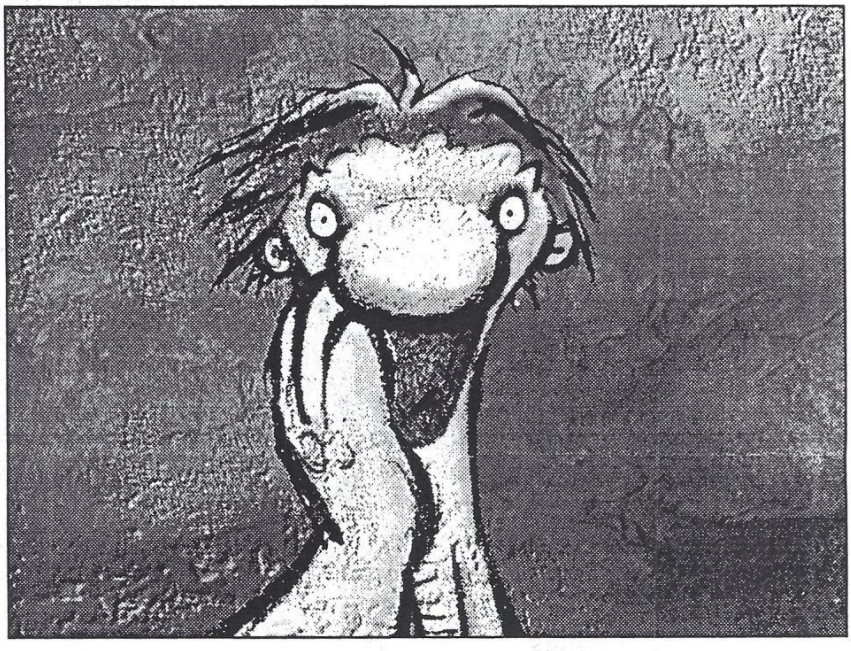
Stubble Trouble Receives Oscar Nomination for Best Animated Short Film

STUBBLE TROUBLE, the delightful animated film produced by Calabash Animation and directed by animator, Joe Merideth, has been nominated for this year's Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film.

Stubble Trouble is the first film to be completed under Calabash Animation's "Animated Shorts Program," in which a story concept is chosen from submissions from the talent group of Calabash Animators to go into production. *Stubble Trouble* has already won a second place for animation at the Palm Springs International Short Film Festival and is nominated for an Annie Award for Best Animated Short Film.



Director Joe Meredith explains the premise of Stubble Trouble by saying: "It's the age old story of man's journey to understand and accept himself." The film's hero, Og, fights a losing battle with his hyperactive beard as he pursues love in the Stone Age.

In speaking of *Stubble Trouble's* Oscar nomination, Calabash Animation's founder and director, Ed Newmann said: "At Calabash we never discovered a formula for inspiring the uninspired-- but we've always been happy to nurture and encourage people who are equipped with their own initiative, and Joe Merideth has plenty of that.

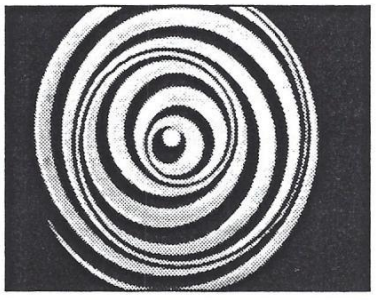
Eight years ago, Joe was hired at Calabash as a cel painter. This year he's been nominated for an Academy Award. That journey was fueled entirely by his own persistence and devotion to excellence. We could not possibly be more proud of him."

Calabash Animation, based in Chicago, is a classical character animation house specializing in cel, computer, clay, cut-paper and sand animation and special effects. In the years since its inception, Calabash has created two original television specials for the CBS owned and operated stations, produced several children's films for Encyclopedia Britannica, and created hundreds of highly successful TV commercials for products such as Lucky Charms, Trix, HoneyNut Cheerios, Little Caesar's Pizza, Mr. Clean, Keebler Wheatables and others. More information can be found at their website www.calabashanimation.com.

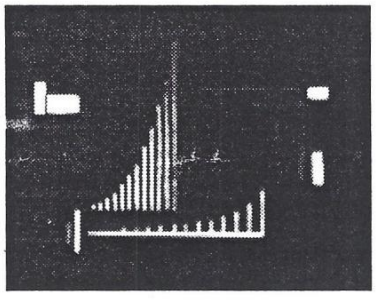
Article courtesy of JANE AYER PUBLIC RELATIONS, INC.

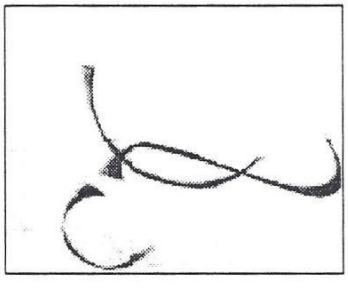
Abstract German Animation (Middleton) continued from 1

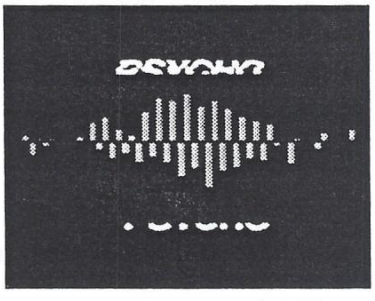
create a visual language than to demonstrate a stop-motion trick. Edison wanted product, not art. Blackton provided the footage.



Back in France, Viking Eggeling died for the cause. His *Diagonal Symphony* was considered by many to be the "first" true abstraction in animation. He spent three or four years on it and died less than three weeks after its first showing in 1925. Hans Richter, his assistant, quickly stepped in and put together *Rhythm 21*, which he claimed he made four years before *Diagonal Symphony*. His other contributions to abstract film also bear a distinct resemblance to Eggeling's work, perhaps influenced by his marriage to the earlier artist's widow. It is also interesting to note that *Diagonal Symphony* exists today only in fragments. Richter also claimed to have invented film trickery for his *Ghosts Before Breakfast* (1928), but these techniques had been in common use since the days of French magician-filmmaker Georges Melies. For all this squabbling, neither's filmwork can be considered the birth of abstraction. That honor should go to Walther Ruttmann.







Ruttmann created *Opus I* in 1922, with hand-colored images and a specially-composed score that was beautifully recreated at an Ottawa film festival in 1988 (and since has been released by Kino as a companion to *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City*). Ruttmann worked for UFA and stimulated the animation muse in several contemporaries, namely Oskar Fischinger and Lotte Reininger. He created the aforementioned documentary *Berlin*, and was integral in the special effects work on Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. He saw sketches by Fischinger and encouraged him into film, bought a wax-slicing machine for effects that Fischinger developed, and had a striking influence on Fischinger's early techniques. He then coordinated the production of Lotte Reininger's *Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1926), brought in Fischinger's wax slicing machine for special effects, and the result was the first animated feature film, over a decade before Disney's *Snow White*.

With the coming of sound, Ruttmann chose to stay with narrative film, at one point helping edit *Olympia*. However, Fischinger continued developing his abstract style and technique into the sound era, and most notably, into the Nazi era. Nazis hated abstract art. When Fischinger began winning awards, especially after his Italian premiere of *Komposition im Blau* (1935), he was encouraged to take his "degenerate art" to America (his brother, Hans, remained behind, and before being shipped to the Russian front, managed to complete the final abstract animated film in Germany in 1939).

While in America, Fischinger was teased for producing more children than films, but managed to create a handful of masterpieces: first, *Allegretto* for Paramount

Abstract German Animation (Middleton) continued on 5

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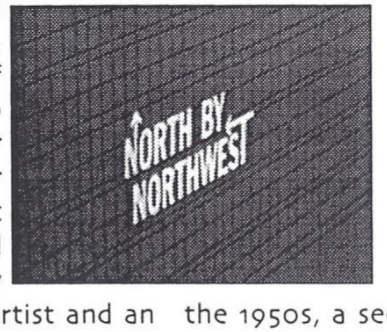
Abstract German Animation (Middleton) continued from 4

(who didn't know what to do with it), *Optical Poem* for MGM (who, with Fred Quimby in charge of animation, also didn't know what to do with it), and the storyboard for the *Toccata* and *Fugue* sequence for *Fanstasia* at Disney (who didn't understand it). *Allegretto* and *Optical Poem* survive as testimony to his ability as both an abstract artist and an animator who knew how to make his work appeal to a general audience, even if his distributors were lost. It took the reissue of *Fantasia* in DVD "special edition" for Disney to fully acknowledge his contribution—they had gone from complete denial in the 1970's to an attempt at reconstructing Fischinger's vision for



the DVD release, no doubt due to the diligence of John Canemaker (whose 1977 *Camera Three* retrospective on Fischinger had a profound influence on your humble typist's life).

As Fischinger's output waned in the 1950s, a seemingly unlikely resurgence in abstract animation appeared in the work of Alfred Hitchcock. His opening sequences, designed by Saul Bass, for *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, and *Psycho* all bore striking resemblances to films from Walther Ruttmann. The swirls of *Vertigo* recalled the silent-era

Abstract German Animation (Middleton) continued on 6

Abstract German Animation (Middleton) continued from 5

studies by Fischinger. The linear work was reminiscent of the opening for *Berlin*. And even the nightmare by Jimmy Stewart in *Vertigo* hearkened back to a similarly staged episode in *Metropolis*. There is a possible explanation—during the 1920s, Hitchcock was employed at UFA, first as a title writer, then as an assistant director. He would have been there, learning the basics of his filmmaking craft, while the likes of Ruttmann, Fischinger, and Reininger were creating their own visual vocabulary. Hitchcock, ever the economist and possessed of a long memory, probably learned some of this vocabulary for his own, later use.

- *Jim Middleton*

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Legendary animation director and artist Chuck Jones, passes away at 89

Chuck Jones, legendary animation director and artist, best known for his work on the Warner Bros. Classic Looney Tunes cartoon series, died of congestive heart failure on February 22.

Jones made more than 300 animated films, winning three Oscars as director and in 1996 an honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement. His most valued award was the honorary life membership from the Directors Guild of America.

Jones helped bring to life many of Warner Bros. most famous characters—Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd and Porky Pig. The list of characters he created himself includes Road Runner, Wile E. Coyote, Marvin Martian, Pepe le Pew, Michigan J. Frog and many others. He also produced, directed and wrote the screenplays for "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas," a television classic.

He worked with and for directors Tex Avery and Bob Clampett until the early forties when they left the studio, and for the remainder of his years at Warner Bros. he worked in parallel with Directors Freleng and Robert McKimson. He remained at Warner Bros. until the studio was closed in 1962.

Jones also directed the Academy Award winning film, *The Dot and the Line.*

Jones established his own production company, Chuck Jones Enterprises, in 1962 and produced nine half-hour animation films for television including Rudyard Kipling's *Rikki Tikki Tavi* and *The White Seal.*

In recent years, Jones' work has been honored at film festivals and museums throughout the world, including a one-man retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. His autobiography, Chuck Amuck, appeared in 1989, now in its fifth printing.

Two years ago, Jones established the Chuck Jones Foundation, designed to recognize, support and inspire continued excellence in art and the art of classic character animation.

He will be missed.

SUMMER 2002

ASIFA/Central

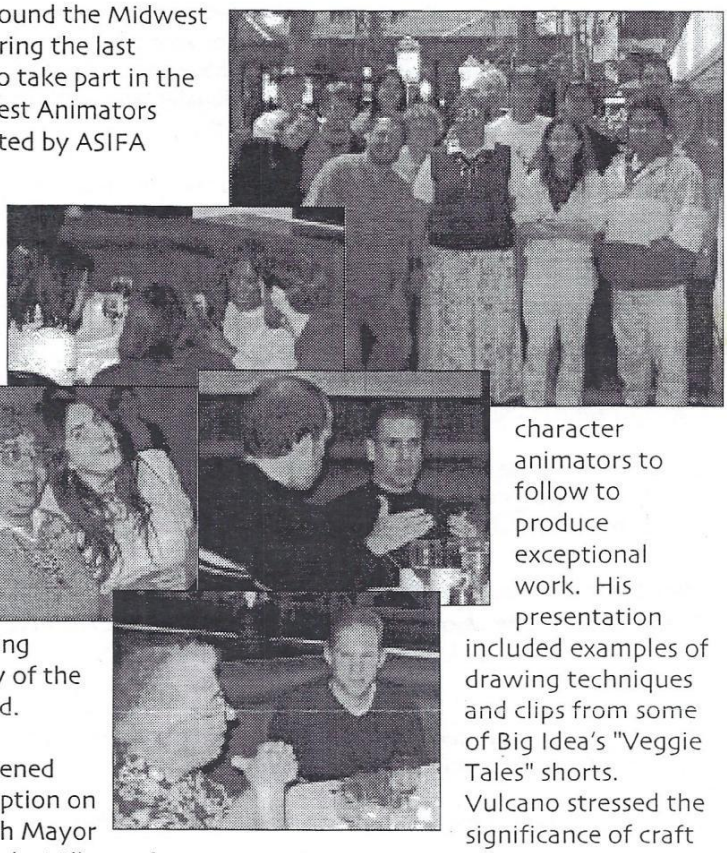
FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

SUMMER 2002

10th Annual Midwest Animators Conference a Rousing Success *by Dave Daruszka*

Animators from around the Midwest joined together during the last weekend of April to take part in the 10th Annual Midwest Animators Conference presented by ASIFA Central.



The site of the Conference, the DoubleTree Guest Suites Hotel, was a new location for the event. The amenities included a 90-seat business theatre with stadium-style seating where the majority of the programs were held.

The Conference opened with a dessert reception on Friday evening with Mayor Brian Krajewski of the Village of Downers Grove in attendance. The reception was followed by a presentation of animation from the National Film Board of Canada. Jack Horwitz of the NFB introduced the program. Open screenings, a long-standing feature of the Conference, were held in the Hospitality Suite following the program.

Saturday's activities were kicked-off with a fascinating and informative presentation by Marc Vulcano, Director of Animation of Big Idea Productions. Mr. Vulcano outlined his personal approach to animation and provided a step-by-step process for character animators to follow to produce exceptional work. His presentation included examples of drawing techniques and clips from some of Big Idea's "Veggie Tales" shorts. Vulcano stressed the significance of craft and a willingness to accept criticism and input from peers, as well as the importance of seeking out mentors.

Lunch followed this program, and the hotel provided an extraordinary deli buffet that delighted the attendees. The highlight of lunch was a drawing for prizes provided by ASIFA Central President Jim Middleton. The irrepressible Middleton presided over the drawing, giving away a plethora of art books and animation paraphernalia.

The first program of the afternoon was an overview of animation products from NewTek, presented by Philip Nelson, NewTek's East Coast Sales Manager. Nelson took the attendees through a tour of "Aura" and "Lightwave 3D", showing the ease of

Rousing Success (Daruszka) continued on 4

Inside this Issue

Letter from the President and more ...

Greetings from the President *by Jim Middleton*

This newsletter is clustered with events that demonstrate that animation is alive and well in the region of ASIFA Central. And the year isn't over yet! The April conference was a breathless, amazing collection of seminars and presentations, and the first KAFI showed that the area can support an international festival in our own back yard. This October, Ottawa beckons--and while it has been two years since the last gathering, I'm still just now filing the notes I made in 2000 (little wonder the drawing table is getting dusty!). O Canada! Comme j'aime votre cafe!

Our website, by the way, craves your attention. It wants to know what you wish it to become. Forward your comments to any one of the board members (conveniently located on the masthead on page two for your dining pleasure), or I shall have to poll the membership individually (and won't that be painful).

If you are in an area that craves membership applications, let us know that too--we're redesigning our lil' ol' brochure and can gleefully clog your mailbox with specimens suitable for framing or using as bookmarks in your dogeared copy of The Animator's Survival Kit.

Thus ends this rude interruption to the latest opus edited by our ever patient Jennifer.

Hiroshima Poster from ASIFA/Central Reply

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the poster at the ASIFA conference in April! It made it to Japan!
Jim Middleton

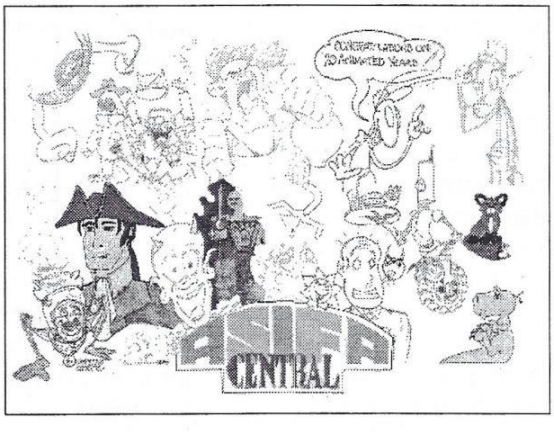
Thank you very very much for kindly taking your time to make the beautiful drawing for ASIFA-Japan!!

It reached us safe last week, and I must apologize you for this delay to write you...

I am very honoured to be able to exhibit your work in HIROSHIMA2002. Please send my best regards to all your members too.

Thank you very much for everything!!

Sincerely yours,
Sayoko Kinoshita



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The Midwest Animator's Conference: Comments from Attendees *by Deanna Morse*

The Midwest Animator's Conference, moved to a new location, was a bit changed this year, and although several folks missed the trails of Starved Rock, animators agreed that it was one of the best conferences ever. When I asked a group of attendees to tell me their observations and highlights of the conference, this is what they said.

People liked the small group experience, with the high quality presentations. Everyone felt at home, more comfortable than at some other events. Big Idea's presentation was informative, and the group was easily able to restate the four steps of character animation
1. research and homework,
2. set up the preliminary stages,
3. execute,
4. proofread/check for glitches.

Having the room to share animations with each other was appreciated, and several folks said they intend to stay in touch with animators they met through those open screenings.

Liz Zielke, animator and student at Grand Valley State University, served as a student volunteer for the conference. She said, "As a volunteer, I made sure that everything was set up nicely. I organized the registration table, and I ran the VCR and tapes during the presentations."

"It was interesting being a student volunteer. I felt like I got in on more stuff because I was always there and at registration I got to meet people right away. I could talk to the people when the presentation was over. It was easy to approach the speakers; they all thought I was important!"

"It was also a plus to get free room and board. The room was nice and big. It was comfortable, and I had it all to myself. Mary Lou and Dave were cool. They were really nice and fun to work with. And Jim Middleton as fun - he was really friendly right away."

"I liked the technical presentations, like the Lightwave program. It made me want to explore that program. It was interesting to see what the company had done, including video games. I liked getting the free software!"

For Jim Schaub and Melissa Bouwman the highlight of the retreat was seeing Skip Battaglia's presentation, where he showed his independent work and shared the great stories behind it. They valued his enthusiasm and his reasons for undertaking and structuring the films as they were. Jim said, "I liked his line, "They say animators are patient, but it is not true! I'm not patient at all!" and Melissa said, "I liked when he said, "Film is an interruption of life. You just want to get it done and then get on with it." They were impressed that he didn't start drawing until he was 30, and also with his strategy of writing down dreams and images upon awakening and using them as core elements in his films.

Recent graduate Bev Alger chose the ASIFA retreat over her college graduation ceremony, and was excited when her ticket was pulled and she won the first door prize. "The weekend was a lot more exciting than going to graduation. I liked seeing the variety of work: *Boconi's Bike, That Special Monkey, the Barbara Manatee Song and The Big Snit*."

Bev valued the opportunity to meet so many people who worked in a variety of positions: layout designer, audio designer, web designer, animator. "It was interesting to see the different ways people get things done - as independents, and in the industry. There are so many different ways that you can get it done."

Everyone agreed that the weekend was a good opportunity for schmoozing, networking, and making new friends. Everyone commented, too, on how well organized the event was - things ran on time and very smoothly.

The retreat was followed just two weeks later by the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International - KAFI. So Midwest Animators got a double treat of two weekends of inspiring animation this spring! We hope next year to have the retreat in conjunction with the KAFI festival; to combine and support our interests. It was a great few weeks of animation!

Thanks to organizers Dave Daruszka and Mary Lou Haynes for their top notch event. It was inspirational, educational and fun!

Deanna Morse is a professor at Grand Valley State University and treasurer of ASIFA Central.

Rousing Success (Daruszka) continued from 1
creating work on the software. Nelson stressed the cost-effectiveness of NewTek's products as well as their versatility. He fielded a barrage of questions, many from animators and studios looking to purchase an "all-in-one" software package.

After a short break, Jack Horwitz returned to speak about the history and work of the animation unit of the National Film Board of Canada. Horwitz explained the difficulty of working for a government agency while maintaining the atmosphere of artistic freedom that gives NFB productions their unique signature. He explained the difference between "sponsored films", those produced for other government agencies, and independent works from animators affiliated with the NFB. Horwitz was joined by animator Shira Avni, who's recently completed short "From Far Away" was screened. Her animation dealt with the emotional stress a young Lebanese girl encounters when her family is forced to relocate to Canada. Horwitz also screened clips from classic animated shorts produced at the NFB, including work by Norman McClaren.

The next presentation on the schedule was an overview by animator and educator Deanna Morse on the two-year process of completing a DVD compilation of her independent work. Morse took the audience through a tour of the DVD while explaining the many steps required to bring the project to completion. She explained her good fortune to work with a local production company in Grand Rapids, Michigan that enthusiastically undertook the work and the individuals who provided invaluable technical assistance. The DVD was funded through a series of arts grants, and Morse explained that while the medium was an ideal outlet for animators, production costs and distribution are an obstacle to the average independent animator.

The gathering broke for dinner and then returned to hear the evening's final speaker, animator and educator Skip Battaglia from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Battaglia screened a number of his award-winning films and explained the influences in his work, including Modernist artists from the early part of the 20th Century. He explained his philosophy behind his "hand-made" films, and regaled the audience with his humor and experiences. He revealed a great knowledge and love of the cinema that is readily apparent in his abstract work.

The evening closed with more open screenings of attendees' works, including studio productions, independent and student animations. Sunday morning's BYOB (Bring Your Own Breakfast) was a continuation of the open screenings until the conference ended at noon.

The 10th Midwest Animators Conference was a great success, and many attendees commented on the quality of the programs and the inspiration they drew from both the speakers and other animators in attendance. The goal of the event coordinators, Dave Daruszka and Mary Lou Haynes, was to raise the level of professionalism of the event while maintaining the atmosphere of openness and conviviality that has become its hallmark. Everyone left invigorated and looking forward to next year's event.

- Dave Daruszka

Fun Quotes

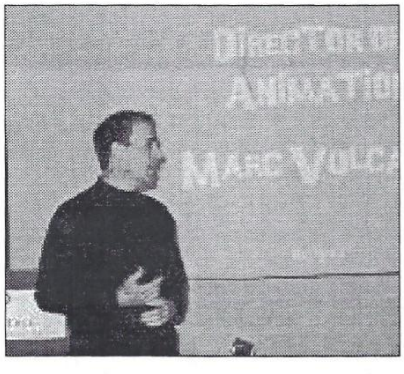
"When you run out of funny ideas, add a cow."
– Mike Allore

The Tenth ASIFA Central Retreat – Random Observations *by Jim Middleton*

The term retreat seemed incongruous with the proposed pace and scope of this year's gathering, so a grander vision and venue was needed for this tenth anniversary. Even the ultimate description of conference seemed limited to describe the weekend coordinated by Dave Daruszka and Mary Lou Haynes; with the attendance of representatives of Big Idea Productions, would pilgrimage have befit the proceedings?

Centralized to Chicago, the move east prompted more attendance from commercial participants; there were certainly more new faces in the crowd. DoubleTree Guest Suites seemed overwhelmed by the cross section of conferences being hosted that weekend--but there was coffee if you knew where to look, and there was an eclectic blend of cacophony available in the central dining atrium.

But the main events were percolating in the conference rooms, and they began with opening ceremonies attended by the mayor of Downers Grove, a representative from the Chicago Tribune, and even the Cultural Affairs attache from the Canadian embassy. One gentleman even appeared, registered, and then stayed only long enough to pass on a video copy of the anime "Metropolis," obtain photographic evidence of the transaction, and then vanish into the night. And did I mention the full service bar? And cheese, Gromit, cheese!



Jack Horwitz from the Film Board of Canada began the weekend with his overview of the marvels from their past and their promise for the future; more aficionado than animator, his enthusiasm set the upbeat tone for the conference (and it continues to this day, and can spill over onto your desktop if you mail him at j.horwitz@nfb.ca).

Marc Anthony Volcano erupted (oh isn't that a clever turn of the verb) with the Big Idea of Veggie Tales. Offering generous quotes from theBooks of Johnson and Thomas, he described the Rules of Animation and showed how they were integrated into the output of his studio. Say what you want, these guys are geniuses of marketing, and equally phenomenal with using their organization for maximal effect--their soon-to-be released theatrical feature was created with a staff of 8 animators (certainly as Felliniesque an allusion as one could ever draw), and the represents Mr. Volcano's simultaneous involvement as the film's director.

The evolution of Lightwave from its beginnings at Commodore as Video Toaster was Philip Nelson's contribution, and his generosity didn't stop there – he had copies of software! One of the purposes of these retreats is to get everyone worked up to create amazing things; the ultimate letdown comes afterwards as the workaday left-brain activities scream for their undue attention. A few minutes toying with a Lightwave demo can make you feel invincible and undaunted and ready to face any project with a stimulated mind and a hefty double-click (I know I'd love to set up a long line of PCs or iMacs, each loaded with whatever the latest demo I've seen, and then lock the door and emerge only for coffee and bathroom breaks, the latter being potentially truncated with proper surgical intervention...but that's just me).

And animators, did I mention animators!? Michigan native and snappy dresser Deanna Morse, creator of Deanimation and now a DVD producer of Move-Click-Move! showed how her interactive screen menu was just as entertaining as her collection of films (and she has a few DVDs left, feel free to contact her at morsed@gvsu.edu). Skip Battaglia from New York's Rochester School of Technology gave a retrospective of his 20 years of animated work, each specimen representing a personal vision. He discussed his frustration with getting music rights, relating how he tried to track down a particular jazz piece but then made use of a student from Rochester's music department with a penchant for a capella – one of the performances by Bobby McFerrin that won't be found on any of his CD releases.

After all this, your humble typist had to return to the vaguely suppressed coloration of so-called reality, with the somber grays of a rainy Midwestern Sunday, comforted only by the potential for another such gathering of ASIFA fans and friends within the year.

- Jim Middleton

KAFI Judges Produce Quality Program

by Dave Baker

Three esteemed ASIFA central members judged the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International. Veteran animation instructor and judge for the Seoul animation festival in Korea, Deanna Morse, animator extraordinaire and historian Jim Middleton of the Animating Apothecary, and artist, animator, instructor Melissa Bouwman. These dedicated professionals hunkered down for two weekends in April to review and judge the over 200 entries into the festival.

The environment was straightforward. A classroom/auditorium at KVCC with theatrical video projection and sound afforded the judges a venue similar to what would be seen at the State Theater in Kalamazoo.

In other festivals, because of the volume of entries, a selection committee will often pare down the films so the judges do not have to watch every film. Because we were dealing with only 200 as opposed to 1000 films, we used a simpler system. Watch them all. Some films were immediately disqualified because of non-conformance with entry specifications. Other films were subject to "The Mercy Flag" which allowed the judges, who had seen enough after two minutes, to stop the film. Remarkably, the high quality and watch ability of most of the films limited the use of "The White Flag of Mercy"

To aid in the judging, a 'rubric' system was used. A rubric is a simple scaling tool. In it, we had eight judging scales, which included; Story, Design, Art Direction, Animation, Sound Track, Technical Quality, Judge's Score, and a tie-breaking category, Watchability. These categories had a 1 to 10 scale on it that allowed a total of eighty points to be awarded to a film. Three judges scored the films allowing a grand total of 240 points that would determine the ranking of all the films. This provided an overall picture of a film, which, while being objective, made room for subjectivity, but also evened the playing field and removed much of the bias found in more subjective systems.

The festival manager showed each of the 19 categories individually. In other words, all the postgraduate entries were shown together. This provided context with which to view and judge. The VHS entries were announced only by title, the judges would write the title of the film down and the category. No national origin or director's names were mentioned to eliminate bias. Judging went fast and smoothly. With a liberal supply of donuts, coffee and pineapple topped pizza, the process was, in many ways a wonderful little film festival on its own.

Judging sheets were collected at the end of the day and scores entered into an Excel worksheet providing instant tabulation after processing.

Each category was awarded a bronze, silver and gold medal. Some categories had no entries and no awards given.

While judging, it became obvious that some categories such as SGR (graduate students) and ISW (independent short works) were wellsprings of excellence and creativity. Room was made in the program for these outstanding works. The judges awarded both recognition and money to these outstanding films by creating a special category called "High Honors".

Two more award categories were created. Two outstanding films " Tongues and Taxi's" and "Rockin and Rollin" came in with perfect scores of 240 and were awarded "Best of Show" Little Red Plane was singled out as Director's choice because of excellence and the educational context of the makers. (www.littleredplane.com).

After reviewing the process, the Judging staff of Deanna, Jim and Melissa made recommendations to the director on distribution of award monies and creation of the special "High Honors" category. It was felt that all finalist should share in the rewards since, in effect, all finalists were winners. The breakdown of awards was as follows. All finalists are being awarded $100; bronze medal winners $200, Silver medal $300 and Gold Medal $400. High Honors receive $200, Director's choice $400 and Best of Show $500.

With excellent judging, fair scoring and plenty of patience, the Judges for KAFI 2002 should be applauded for their world class work! Thank you!

- David Baker

Call for Screeners

Next year, KAFI will again call for the world's best animation. We will be anticipating even a greater quantity of high quality entries. We will need to screen these and narrow down these entries to keep the judging concise. We will use a similar system that will distribute the work to keep the quality high.

If you care to be on the screening team, please email me at dbbaker@kvcc.edu or call 616-372-5520 to volunteer.

KAFI Rocks the Midwest!

by Melissa Bouwman

Part One

I would just like to take this opportunity to publicly thank David Baker for having the vision, dedication, and spirit, to organize the Midwest's first international Animation Festival! I'm raising a glass of a fine chilled white wine in toast to you Dave!

The Kalamazoo Animation Festival International (KAFI) blasted on the festival scene with great success May 17 - 19, 2002. I'm pleased to have been involved as a member of the selection committee, and as a giddy attendee. The weekend was packed with a veritable buffet of delightful goodies to tempt the palette of those who have a special place in their heart for animation. My experience at KAFI was festive, educational, and inspirational. For those of you who could not attend, here's your chance to live vicariously through my experience. In part one of my review of the festival, we'll explore the Cartoon Challenge and the Seminars I attended. In part two, we'll get an inside look at the animation screenings and anything else I can't fit into part one :-).

On Thursday night, I was invited to attend a lavish and swanky opening party for those who contributed lots of time, knowledge, or financial backing to make this event possible. It was held in the facilities of Nucleus Multimedia Company. Nucleus has one of the most aesthetically pleasing workspaces I've ever visited...second only to PIXAR. I attended the party with Deanna Morse. We were both very impressed with the delectable food that had been catered for this party. Amongst my favorite edibles were the sushi buffet, and of course, the glorious table of sweets. Adult libations were also on the menu that evening...it was a rough walk back to the hotel for me... The food and drink were merely a backdrop for the enthusiastic group to converse, and make merry. I found myself in the company of many captivating folks, all of us were brimming with anticipation, waiting for the weekend's events to start. Of course most of the conversation centered around KAFI-talk. It was a delightful way to kick off a fabulous weekend of fun and excitement.

Cartoon Challenge

Friday morning, I popped out of bed (an action that only happens at important animation events), and went to pick up my weekend pass so I could proudly display my badge of attendance, and so I could get into the events without hassle. I decided to check in on the Cartoon Challengers that morning. The Cartoon Challenge was an amazing competition unique to KAFI. Eight teams of highly motivated and talented students from several educational institutions had taken the challenge to produce an animated PSA in the course of one week. Their assignment was given to them on Monday morning, and by Friday night at 5:00 pm, they had to have the PSA completed...WHEW! Their topic: promoting arts education as an integral part of every child's education.

When I poked my head into the computer lab on Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Texas campus, I saw very sleepy groups of animators feverishly working against their 5:00 pm deadline. I knew some of the challengers from Grand Valley, and I asked them when they'd slept last. The reply was...7:00 pm Wednesday night...it was 10:30 am Friday at that time, so they'd been awake for nearly 40 hours at that point. A feat only the young could survive without great consequence.

Even in their sleep deprived state, they were chattering excitedly about the incredible experiences they've had all week. They had met some "super cool" people, been given access to "super cool" equipment, light tables, and stacks of animation paper. They raved about the food, the resources, the camaraderie, and of course, the "super cool" animations that were shaping up all around them. I strolled about the work areas, checking out the various PSA's, stepping over the occasional slumbering team members, before returning to the main festival events downtown. I was very impressed with what I saw, and couldn't wait to see the finished projects.

Fast-Forward to the Saturday Night Competition Screening, when the Cartoon Challenge PSA's were scheduled to premiere. The Cartoon Challengers had been moving through the festival events in herds, they had apparently developed strong friendship bonds with their competitors. During the screening, they had parked the herd in the balcony. David took a moment to explain the idea behind the cartoon challenge, and show a "highlights" video of some of the beautiful moments that happened at the Texas campus that week. During the video, cheers of support and laughter erupted from the balcony. They obviously had a great time that week. As each of the PSA's screened that evening, the challengers cheered on each piece, shouting kudos to the various teams. Every one of the PSA's were unique and showcased the talents of each team. I was astonished by what they cranked out in one week. After the showcase of the animations, the audience had to vote, and it was a difficult choice indeed.

Fast-Forward one last time to the Sunday evening award presentation. Cartoon Challengers were encouraged to come down from the balcony to be easily accessible for the awards presentation. The votes had been tallied, a

KAFI Rocks (Bouwman) continued on 8

KAFI Rocks (Bouwman) continued from 7

winning team selected. It was the moment of truth. But it didn't necessarily feel like the moment of truth. Everyone involved seemed to be winners already, I was moved by the way they all seemed to support each other throughout this experience. When David announced the winning team, Claudia and the Four Swordsmen, a team from the Center for Creative Studies, the whole group (and the audience of course) erupted with applause. Their animation stated "Would you give a child half a present? Would you let a child ride half a roller coaster? Would you let a child go to school half dressed? Then why teach a child to only use half a brain? Save your right brain, support the arts." Of course the visuals that accompanied the dialogue were hilarious. They were presented with the first prize trophy. All teams who took the challenge were presented with a slightly smaller trophy to reinforce the fact that everyone put an extraordinary amount of work into their animations, and they deserved recognition and praise. I raise yet another glass of chilled white wine to the Cartoon Challengers! Cheers!

Seminars and Workshops

I wish I could provide a full report of the many activities that were scheduled for the weekend, but alas, I was not able to attend all of the 13 seminars and 5 software workshops offered. Word on the street is that attendees found the seminars to be very interesting, and the workshops to be very useful.

Ellen Besen: Integrated Storytelling - The Animated Genome Project

I've had the good fortune of meeting Ellen at several Ottawa Animation Festival events, and was very pleased to see that she had been recruited to share her wisdom with the KAFI festival attendees. Ellen teaches writing, storytelling, and animation at Sheridan College (yes the Sheridan College, famous for it's animation department). In Layman's terms, Ellen's presentation focused on the many techniques artist and filmmakers use to disclose story elements, and character development through visual cues, not words. She mentioned that generally speaking, films reveal a cumulative message to their audiences, and place demands on the audience to decipher all these clues.

In this session, we took a closer look at the Disney classic, **Pinocchio**. I generally enjoy a good Disney classic...but after this presentation, I had a newfound respect for the artistic direction of this film. We looked at a couple of scenes with Pinocchio and the villain, Stromboli. After the viewing, with the guidance of Ellen, we discussed the elements of movement, color, use of props and location, and many other aesthetic elements used to infuse the scenes emotion and provide the aforementioned clues. She pointed out the motion of Pinocchio was a blend between human and puppet, limited by his wooden joints, so that we'd not forget that even though he displayed human traits, he wasn't one...yet. We examined the use of the knife prop in the scene where **Pinocchio** is captured by Stromboli in his trailer. We noted the way it was used to delicately count money, or to cut and eat food, while other times the knife was wielded carelessly, posing a constant threat, without being the focus of the scene. I thoroughly enjoyed Ellen's discussion of aesthetics and character development. I could go on and on about the things I learned about **Pinocchio**. I was sad that I couldn't attend her other session where I hear they analyzed **Lady and the Tramp**.

Mike Belzer: Puppets to Computers

Mike Belzer is a new hero of mine. He's a stop motion animator who just happens to work for Disney...and it just so happens that he worked on...THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS. I love **The Nightmare Before Christmas**, it's one of my favorite mainstream stop motion features. In general, I'm a devoted fan of the stop motion technique, but have very little formal education on the production process. Mike Belzer's presentation was an incredible eye opener for me.

He started his presentation by giving us a little background information about his path to becoming a superstar, OK, maybe he doesn't see himself that way, but he has made a definite mark on the face of stop motion animation. Mike animated his first short when he was twelve, which he screened for us prefacing the piece by stating that it shows he wasn't born with the gift to animate stop motion beautifully, and we all have the potential to create animation as finely crafted as his current work with diligent effort. His first short was an adorable claymation. It was a western piece with tempers flaring in a saloon, and if I remember correctly, only the horse leaves the saloon unscathed. Then Mike shared his demo reel, and I nearly wept with admiration at the vast range of work he's done. In addition to **The Nightmare Before Christmas**, he worked on **James and the Giant Peach**, and **Dinosaurs**, He's worked on commercial spots, including the Pillsbury dough boy and Hershey's Kisses, and has produced his own shorts. One of my favorite Belzer shorts featured a grill tending mouse. The voice of the mouse was a sound byte of Orson Welles during one of his tirades while shooting a commercial spot.

After we learned a bit about Mike's background and skills, he shared many tips and tricks about the stop motion process, all the while telling us fun little production tales. Mr. Belzer is very charismatic, I could listen to him speak for hours. He showed us how to make

KAFI Rocks (Bouwman) continued on 9

KAFI Rocks (Bouwman) continued from 8

our own wire armatures, and even had a step by step handout available. He mentioned that while many main characters are animated using a fully "machined" armature, sometimes smaller roles, or even physically smaller characters use the wire armature he shared with us. He discussed some of the subtle things about motion in terms of balancing joints. He shared a lot of "secrets" of how things were done on the set of **The Nightmare Before Christmas.** Mike discussed the importance of being able to act out the motion, or reference actors for motion such as Chaplin. I didn't realize that the dance moves of Jack Skellington were based on Tommy Tune, and Fred Astaire!

Onto the "computers" part of Mike's seminar. I believe the first major computer animation Mike worked on for Disney was **Dinosaur.** He said that it wasn't terribly difficult to make the transition between stop motion to computer animation. He felt there were a number of similarities in how you construct your animation in each medium. He also pointed out early in his presentation that his drawing skills are very limited, and his strength lies in sculpting and modeling. Mike worked with the character "Baylene" in **Dinosaur.** I was intrigued by Mike's discussion of the difficulties he faced, and overcame in trying to create a dinosaur that was elegant, and motherly in terms of facial expressions etc. He also showed a clip of the actress who provided the voice for his character, Joan Plowright, and compared how much of the mannerisms of the character were inspired by the tapes of the Joan delivering her lines.

After his presentation, Mike was available for questions. He had set up a table of some of the models he's animated, several armatures and set dressings, and a huge book of production photos...all sorts of candy-like items for the stop motion enthusiast. I had a brief chance to chat with him after the seminar, a very friendly, knowledgeable and all around great guy indeed. Mike told me that a 9 year old had just handed him a business card stating that he was also a stop motion animator...very impressive, and good at networking at such a tender age!

John Fountain: The Industry, the Art form, the Neverending Headache - My Experiences from Kalamazoo to Hollywood

I'm proud to say that I knew John when he was a local celebrity. We worked together for David Baker at Classic Animation. John was a storyboard artist, and animator, and I was a production assistant. That was back in '94-'95...he's been incredibly busy and prolific since then! After loosing contact with John back in '95, I was astounded as I listened to his "adventures" of the past seven years. John Fountain had worked his arse off to make it to the position he holds now as a director and supervisor at Nickelodeon Animation Studios.

John talked about his experiences in Michigan, beginning with his college years at Western Michigan University where he took a variety of classes from art to journalism, to acting. He said the fact that he didn't study one subject intensively gave him an edge against the competition out in L.A. He said that you must be able to bring something to a company that no one else can bring...an original drawing style, diverse skills, etc. While in K-Zoo, John created a comic strip which ran for seven years in the Western Herald. This was part of the reason for his local fame. Another important (and cool) accomplishment was his nationally distributed BULK comix anthology. It was during this time that he landed a job at Classic Animation...his first opportunity in the field.

He then discussed the sometimes crazy, sometimes unbearable, sometimes amazing path he took to get from his first entry level job in California to his current job at Nickelodeon. He said he owed a great deal of thanks to some friends who had let him crash at their pad, until he had a job, and his own apartment. When he moved out to California, he was scraping by on little cash, and doesn't know if he would have made it without their hospitality. John also mentioned the importance of taking risks, and getting out of your comfort zone. He said the bigger the risk, the better the payoff, and that misery can create some brilliant work :-).

I wish I could remember more of the specifics on the companies John worked at in California before Nickelodeon, but the names escape me. I do recall lovely tales of luck interwoven with his tales of hard work, and struggle. In one such tale we find John returning from an unsuccessful job interview...a job he basically moved to California hoping to get. As he left the interview, he remembered the World Animation Celebration was happening that weekend. It was getting close to the time that they were closing down the Celebration, but John thought, "I'll swing by and see if anything is going on." Since things were winding down, the folks at the door let him in free (saving him $60), and he noticed several companies were still reviewing portfolios. Somehow, John managed to bypass the long line of animators waiting for a portfolio review at the Nickelodeon booth. The Nickelodeon recruiter gave John an encouraging review of his work, and then asked if John planned on going to the big "wrap" party that evening. John gave an affirmative reply, but wondered how much this would set him back. As he left the booth, he heard two people talking about having more tickets to the party than they needed. John snagged the opportunity, and made some

KAFI Rocks (Bouwman) continued on 10

KAFI Rocks (Bouwman) continued from 9

vital connections at that event. Whew!

A summary of John's experience...he worked as a storyboard artist for Klasky Csupo, then he was offered a position on the South Park movie. He knew that he'd have to get away from Klasky Csupo in order to get into Nickelodeon, so he took the job. After working with the South Park crew for a short span of time, he gets a call from Nickelodeon...can he take some tests to apply for a character design position? Well of course he can. So he lands a job at Nickelodeon...but he needs to give a months notice to South Park. For one crazy month, he was working 2 jobs each day on 3 hours of sleep...I'm raising a glass of a fine chilled white wine to you John. You're determination is awe inspiring.

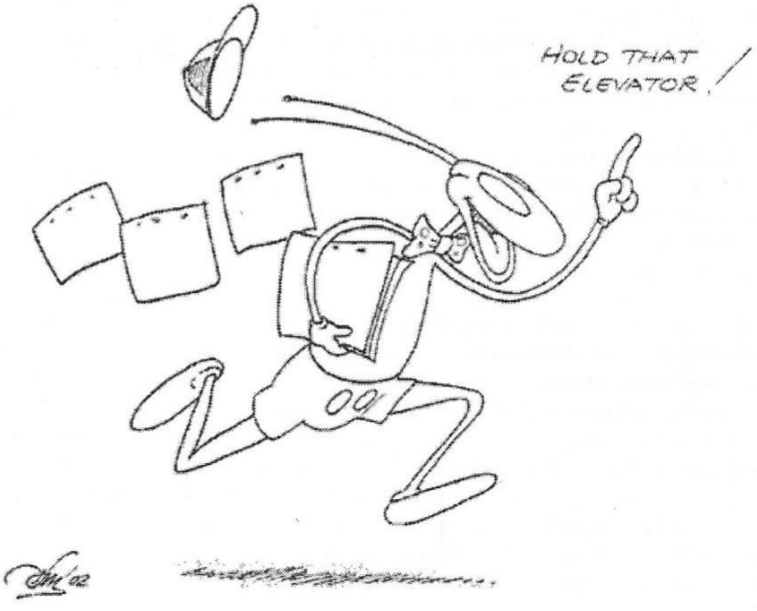
You would think that John would be pleased with a delightful job in Character Design, but then, you don't know John. He continued to devise ways to get himself into the director's chair at Nickelodeon, pitching concept after concept. Until finally, he lands an opportunity to direct a pilot for a show he conjured up called "The Tantrum." The Tantrum features a young superhero who gets the "bad guys" to back down by throwing an ungodly painful tantrum...works every time. He shared "The Tantrum" pilot, and I was very amused. Now John directs a series on Nickelodeon called "The Fairly Odd Parents." It's a fantastic concept...a hilarious show...you must check it out.

The other seminars that I sadly couldn't attend deserve a mention and a hearty round of Applause. Deanna Morse (professor at Grand Valley State University and independent artist/filmmaker/animator extraordinaire) did a presentation about her new DVD. The designers/producers of her DVD, Grey Christian and Eric Oehrl were also present. They discussed the making of this incredible collection of Deanna's work that not only showcases her talents, but is also designed to be used as a teaching tool. Jim Middleton's presentation "A Sound Theory - The Evolving Use of Sound in Creating Independent Animation" explored the use of sound in film and animation through the ages. Of course, he touched on the work of his hero, Oskar Fischinger. Jim also shared his vast knowledge of the use of public domain music, and gave out a CD of public domain music he compiled from his audio archives, including some selections played on a wax cylinder! Jim is a well known in the animation world as the "Animating Apothecary." An incredibly talented, prolific, and fun artist he is.

Other seminars focused on drawing skills for animation. Brian Lemay, of Sheridan College, held a workshop on character design principles. A couple of my friends attended his workshop and said that he gave some great tips about coming up with new characters, working with poses, and he even shared a nifty trick that involved staring into a light...but don't try that at home without specific instruction. Representing the Max the Mutt Animation School, Tina Seemann discussed the connections between life drawing and animation. According to the KAFI program "Both animation students and professionals will learn something new from this studio experience. Bring your sketchbook!"

Well folks, this brings me to the end of Part One of my in-depth coverage of the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International. Stay tuned for the next installment in the Fall newsletter. I'm pouring the last bit of my fine chilled white wine in a toast to everyone involved with the festival. Cheers to your contribution. The festival could not have happened without the dedication of many individuals who were determined to see it through. One last thanks to David Baker...you rock Dave!

For more information on the festival, or to check out the Cartoon Challenge PSA's, go to the comprehensive KAFI web site: www.kafi.kvcc.edu



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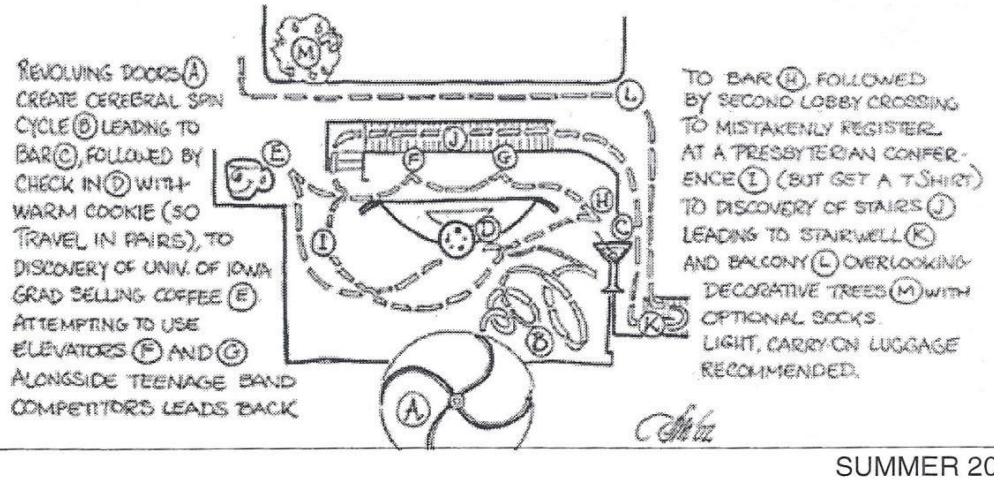
GETTING TO THE SECOND FLOOR

AT DOUBLETREE SUITES



ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

FALL 2002

Frame by Frame,
or
A cacophony of cluttered clues, collected, collated, and culled from the combined coordination of members, nearly members, and those who possess insight and direction of tales oft told; being, for this number, a respite for the regular editor, now in celebratory bliss, by a volunteer, lost amid a world that persists in vision, fills its frame with lively latitudes, precious platitudes, and deadlines too close for comfort;
and,
In consideration for those who anticipate the bon mot, the muddled mail, and the receipt of missives, messages, and memoranda not relating to matters fiscal, to wit: accounts payable. In short, *bills.*
To those before, and those within, and those soon to be without, this little typing exercise is humbly dedicated.

CONGRATULATIONS! You have reached the inside front cover of FRAME BY FRAME. This makes a turning point in your literary education. You are lost, a bit frightened, not too sure if this is a good thing... well, relax, grasshopper, exhale... take my hand... let me lead you....

Gotcha!

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT!

For reasons that I find completely elusive, I have been asked to teach an introduction to animation class at the local community college. I suppose, in keeping with the lag time of educational institutions to the ebb and flow of the real world, they decided to examine this potential employment opportunity just as studios are slashing staff. Who can tell.

As part of the program, I have been showing films from my archive, beginning with the early works of Cohl, McCay, and Sullivan. The other night I ran Norman McLaren's "Neighbours," as an example of non-cel animation, and it dawned on me how timely the choice was, as the film had just turned fifty. Most of the films I have shown have been politely tolerated as being archaic curios, anything predating "Ren and Stimpy" being considered an archaic curio, but this time the students sat, stunned and silent, as this tale of reciprocal destruction played out. As the multinational closing credits played out their simple message, "Love Your Neighbour," one student said, "They'd never let that movie out *now*." And it struck me that, amid all the sabre-rattling, the willingness to destroy without deliberation, the isolated ideology coming out of Washington, such a quiet, gentle sentiment as expressed in "Neighbours" would indeed be considered unpatriotic and unshowable in today's "market." Perhaps that is why the film had to be from Canada.

By the time this newsletter reaches your hands, Canada will again emerge as a focus for animation. The coordinator for the Ottawa festival, Chris Robinson, will doubtless again try for controversy for its own sake; certainly, some of his ramblings at AWN's website seem to be preparing us for some sensory assaults. Perhaps he, too, could look toward "Neighbours" as an example of how to state one's case simply, elegantly, and timelessly.

Well, it sounds like the hour and post-911 have gotten to me this time. Let us hope the light at the end of the tunnel is not an oncoming train, and that somewhere, sometime, cooler minds shall prevail.

Good luck, and be amazing.

Jim Middleton

ASIFA CENTRAL Mission Statement
ASIFA: Association Internationale du Film d'Animation
(you know, you just have to love the French)

The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. – adopted March, 1992

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Just 'cuz I want to have his name here:
Dave Daruszka

The best website in North America:
http://www.asifa.org/animate

To join:
Send a CHECK, in VALID CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS to the UNITED STATES DOLLAR, E. Pluribus Unum, et. al, to the address on the back of this newsletter. This is for your own good. Per year: students $15, Gen'l $20, Internat'l $40 (incl. general), Corporate $300. Provide full address, phone, email, and websites.

All the news that fits in print, herein printed in the US on recycled paper.
Although it looks sooo tasty, DO NOT EAT!
Some contents may not be safe for minors.

KAFI - Still Rockin' the Midwest
Part 2 – by Melissa Bouwman

I do love the fall. The lovely sites and smells of the season, time to haul out my favorite sweaters and cool boots. For me, fall is the season to shift from the chilled white varieties of wine, to the savory warming flavors of the red wines. My current favorite is the Rosemount Estates Shiraz, a tasty wine from the outback regions of Australia. It's a little pricey if you tend to budget less than $10 for your wine selections, but it's well worth the extra shillings. The KAFI festival should only be associated with the finer things in life, a bottle of Boones Farm would not be appropriate. Thus for Part Two of our adventures at the KAFI Festival, the luscious Shiraz will be my muse. As I uncork the bottle and pour my first glass, I will again invite those readers of drinking age to put down the newsletter, and grab yourself a glass of wine...it will make my pontifications more enjoyable.

In Part Two, as promised, I shall be sifting through the fond memories of the screenings and other special events of the KAFI festival. For the record, the opinions and recollections that follow are completely based on my experience...not anyone else's...and therefore should not be considered objective facts...that would be boring...and could get me into trouble. Occasionally, I will have guest writers pop in to offer their insights into events that I missed in my adventures at KAFI.

The Three Graces of Animation at KAFI

Special Events (indeed!)

One of the goals Dave Baker had as founding father of KAFI was to incorporate events that were "Family Friendly." He planned on two such screenings that were free to the public: the Saturday morning Cartoons, and the VeggieTales singalong.

I did attend a portion of the Saturday Morning Cartoon screening, and I had a hoot! The site of many children in attendance with parents and grandparents truly warmed my heart. The theatre was packed! Cartoons from the 1920's to the 1960's were screened that morning, with the silent cartoons accompanied by the State Theatre's Keyboard Artist. The idea was to recreate the unique and nostalgic experience of going to the theatre to see cartoon shorts, an event that is generally lost on today's generation, who have the "luxury" of viewing the Saturday Morning line-up all alone in their living rooms. Though I was enjoying the cartoons myself, what was more interesting to me was to sit back and watch the crowd. I witnessed many beautiful moments. I saw one elderly woman lean over and tell the child she was with that the cartoon on the screen was the very first one she had seen when she was little. I heard one child ask, "This is what cartoons were like when you were a kid?" There was plenty of laughter and delight as old favorites were played. The atmosphere made me smile. A toast to Dave for developing this event!

The VeggieTales Singalong also drew its appeal from movie theatre rituals of yore. I gleaned my background info

from the comprehensive KAFI program. Apparently, back in the 30's and 40's, filmgoers would enjoy short films before the feature. One style of shorts were six minute cartoon reels that featured popular tunes of the day. As they played, the lyrics would be superimposed on the screen, encouraging the audience to join in, with the familiar bouncing ball keeping time. Today, the VeggieTales offer some very fun little ditties for families to enjoy...and for 45 minutes, the audience chimed in on their favorites with Larry the Cucumber and Bob the Tomato.

Not another Korean Incest Cartoon! No! (the judges' lament)

All Nighters in the Name of Animation

Dave Baker attended this event...and this is his take on the program :

The Growth of Veggietales was a 90 minute film that tracks the growth of "The Big Idea" and its series "VeggieTales" through the first ten years of their existence. Using interviews with Phil Visser, Mike Nowicki and other members of the VeggieTale team, we see how a simple idea has grown into an international phenomenon. Behind the scene video clips from the original shows juxtaposed with current efforts show how Bob and Larry, the stars of the show have evolved from simple shaded shapes to fully acting, costumed and ripened vegetables. We also get previews of new shows including 3,2,1 Penguins and their first feature length film Jonah. If you ever have wondered how a simple idea, a computer in a bedroom, lots of hard work and faith can be the start of a major new animation studio, "The Growth of VeggieTales" can bring this to life.

Dave Baker considers lunch

Hot on the heels of this show, the VeggieTale Singalong brought families together at the State Theater for a free show on Sunday Afternoon. This short event used a 'follow the bouncing ball' format to engage the audience in a fun 'old timey' community sing song. Over 500 parents and children raised their voices to the strains of "The Cheeseburger Song","We are the Pirates who don't do Anything" and "Endangered Love" among others. Kids who have never experienced this early form of movie theater "preview" entertainment were treated to a genre of film experience enjoyed by their grandparents.

Thanks Dave! At this time, I would like to invite

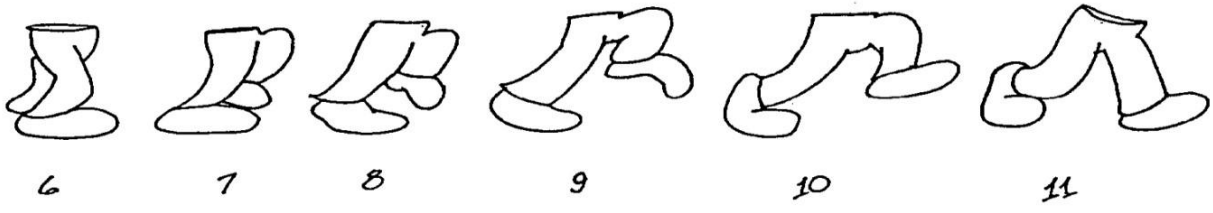
Jim Middleton (a fellow judge) to offer his insight into the retrospective screenings of the Fleischer Studios.

The Fleischers were technologically ahead of anyone else in animation for years before Mickey first squeaked. They had color, sound, and even dabbled in feature film production in the 1920s. However, they had drawbacks on maintaining strong characters, fear of embracing their own unique take on the cartoon world, and did not own their product. Because of this, they are known primarily as the studio that produced the first Popeye series and kept Betty Boop in the public eye long after the Hays Office had diluted her, well, let's call it cinematic presence. The KAFI festival presented a series of Fleischer retrospectives that ably demonstrated all their incredible strengths and talents, as well as their strategic shortcomings. Coordinated by Inkwell Image's Ray Pointer, a man of intensity and passion forthe animated image, many of these films had not seen a theatrical venue in over sixty years. Some of them are masterworks of cinematic reconstruction– the earliest KoKo Song Car-Tunes from the mid-1920s had to be resynched from their original 20fps soundtrack to modern projection speed. Some of the preprint material has shrunk, owing to the delicate nature of nitrate stock, making the restoration even more of a challenge. "Has Anyone Here Seen Kelly?" was shown for the first time, in its complete form with synchronized soundtrack, since its original release in 1926. Inkwell Images is completing restoration on many of the films in this series for release on video. (For more information on the progress of Ray's project, or to check out the other pre-Mickey video animation specimens, see their website of www.inkwellimagesink.com, or write to Inkwell Images, 5319 Craner Avenue, North Hollywood, CA 91601-3313). The silent series featuring Koko is a study in surreal cinema, and much of this attitude survived into the early sound era. The incredible success of Mickey Mouse, however, pushed Paramount to tighten control on the Fleischers to produce more "commercial" product. Their response to the success of the Silly Symphonies was the Color Classics series–often technically amazing, they nonetheless seemed a pale shadow of the mischief possible just a few years before with Betty Boop and Bimbo. After the disappointing performance of two feature films, Paramount took complete control, renamed the offices "Famous Studios" and eventually diluted the output to a literal ghost– Casper. But for a while, Max and Dave Fleischer created incredible images that are now being preserved for all to watch and study.

The last event I attended at KAFI was the Panel Discussion about violence in animation. The panelists were Joe Cartoon (web designer from Grand Rapids), John Fountain (animation director from Nickelodeon), Maxine Schlacker (producer/educator from Max the Mutt school in Toronto), and Kristin DeKam (humanities instructor at KVCC). It was a fiery discussion indeed! There were some passionate exchanges on beliefs from both panelists and audience members alike. It was a debate I wished that the general public could have seen, considering it dealt a lot with notions of whose responsibility is it to "protect" children from violent imagery. Parents? Society? Media Producers? Of course censorship was not considered a viable option by the panel and most of the attendees. The discussion got downright gritty...I loved it! A toast to you all for providing relevant, interesting, and valid concerns and opinions to the panel...it was an afternoon I shan't forget.

The Competition Screenings

Oh Joy, Oh Rapture! This is how I felt every time I walked into the lavishly gorgeous State Theatre to attend the screenings. As a judge, I had seen this material once before, but I couldn't wait to see many of them again. There were 68 pieces that made it into the competitive screenings. I



shall share some of my favorites.

There were some very sweet and beautiful works yet dismal and a little creepy. I really loved the way the filmmaker Tom Gibbons created puppets that had 2D bodies, with 3D arms and legs. The motion was so realistic it brought a tear to my eye. A toast to you Tom. You're work was awe inspiring!

The Saturday afternoon screening featured a great deal of work created by students. There were many "sweetie-pie" pieces that were obviously made by children, but that added greatly to their charm. *Aliens?, Nine Mile Canyon: Under Construction,* and *Pseudo Pluto*, fall into this group. All of these works were created by elementary school or middle school students.

Aliens? was a piece that was reminiscent of Ardman Animation's *Creature Comforts*. It featured interview sound bytes that responded to the question, "Do you believe in extra-terrestrial life?". Clay forms of non-human entities were created to match the voices. One brilliant moment was the response of the "token skeptical human." A must see...

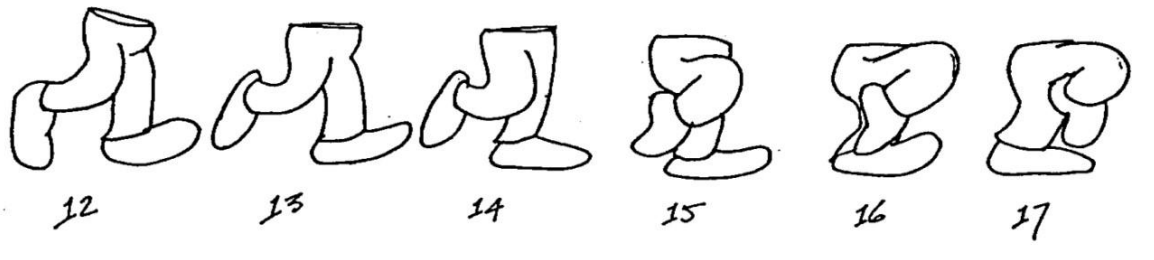
Nine Mile Canyon was so adorable and educational. Assisted by the awesome animator/teacher Karen Aqua, a group of elementary students utilized primarily cut-out animation techniques to chronical the history of the canyon over the past 90 million years. I loved their drawings, the naive sense of motion, and hearing the voices of the young artists as they narrated each scene!

Pseudo Pluto was created by Jonathan Leiter (9 years old)! This ambitious young man presented his business card to Mike Belzer of Disney! I was so impressed. His animation was also of the in the Friday Night Competition (Benign Beings, Bluegaroo, Little Red Plane), however, I have to pay special attention to an absolutely gorgeous stop motion piece called The Hunger Artist. I spoke of this piece for weeks after I saw it for the first time. It is based on the short story by Franz Kafka about a man who's performance act was to be caged for 40 days without food. During his period of starvation, he dreams that he's well-loved by audiences and revered for his talent. The stop motion combined both cut paperband puppet animation. The style was exquisite,stop motion variety, about an imaginary trip to Pluto. My favorite part was the use of cotton balls to represent the explosion and smoke after Pluto had been "destroyed."

I was also quite impressed with a piece called *The Eraser*. Produced by several teenage boys, it has a story line that draws inspiration from Loony Toons, and the rotoscoped style of the "Ah-Ha" music video ("Take on Me") from the 80's. In general, we were all impressed with the director, Andrew Rinehart. He had produced and entered several works into the festival, and showed up to the festival with a DVD compilation of his work! He actually made me a little nervous...a bit too advanced at his tender young age for my tastes ;-).

Last but certainly not least of my faves from the Saturday afternoon show was Angela Mistretta's Shock Treatment. I have the good fortune of knowing Ms. Angela, and she is a very talented young lady indeed. In addition to having her work screened at the festival (and winning 2nd place in her category), Angela participated in the Cartoon Challenge as well. Shock Treatment is beautifully animated in the traditional cell style, and was pulled together using Photoshop and After Effects. It's a bittersweet tale of sibling rivalry and revenge...makes me giggle every time.

The Saturday Evenings show featured many works I just adored. Two pieces stand out in my mind for the sheer beauty and elegance of the animation: *1000 Marys* and *Trilemna.* 1000 Marys uses hundreds of



images of the Virgin Mary and the infant Christ to explore the iconography of the figures over the years. The artist arranged the imagery along a timeline by grouping similar content such as close ups of eyes, and lips. The effect was stunning.

Trilemna was another work that was superbly gorgeous. It features a semi transparent character walking in a cave, losing bits of herself as she walks, then placing these bits in a box. The lighting and modeling in this piece is expertly crafted. I don't generally like work done in a 3D program because it lacks a certain organic feel, but this piece transcends that typical 3D look.

Bike Ride was a bitter sweet tale based on a personal experience of the filmmaker. One day, he decided to surprise a girl he'd been dating by riding his bike 50 miles to her home. It chronicals his thoughts and fears during his journey, and in the end, his worst fear is realized...SNIFF! The style was classy...beautifully animated simple line drawings.

There were many works that made my cheek muscles burn from laughter. The first one was a piece by Grand Valley's own Jason Roth. His piece, *Angry Chair*, is the "heartwarming" tale of "what happens when good furniture goes bad." I love Jason's style, his zesty sense of humor, and I love the raspy voice of the chair!

The Lollipop Tree is pure & wacky brilliance. The soundtrack for this side splitter (found in a trash can) was taken from an educational film circa 1950's. The imagery poked fun at the narrator with a wild collection of characters, sarcastic facial expressions, locations and bizaar situations. I'd like to thank Michael Mayfield for creating such a fun piece. When we screened it during the judging, we were all in need of a good laugh, and your work delivered!
Tongues and Taxis is a film that is scathingly hilarious. I found myself alternating between "Ewww" and "I can't breathe...laughing too hard". This little gem features a man whose boring life in a boring city with boring people takes a drastic turn into the extraordinary when he breaks both arms and loses his tongue in a freak accident caused by a fit of rage. His savvy cat (my favorite character) calmly staples his master's tongue back on, and goes about his business of strategic squirrel hunting. Meanwhile, the man tries to hail a taxi to get his wounds all fixed up. The taxis in this world are brutal, causing death to all who stand in their way. The film ends with a huge, deformed mutant tongue taking it's anger out on the "boring city" and it's inhabitants. Words cannnot do this piece justice. It's an experience you will never forget. A toast to Michael Overbeek. All I can say is...BRILLIANT!

Probably my top pick of the festival was *Das Rocks*. This witty and clever animation took my breath away. We are brought into the world of being a rock by experiencing time the way they would. Two rock piles are having a conversation on a mountain side, and all around them the earth is evolving and changing. They complain of "lichen" that forms on their heads, and they reminisce. The climax of the film is the introduction of humanity. They watch a distant city rise up and sprawl in a way that threatens their existence. The development stops just short of their perch...and one rock says to the other, with a sigh of relief, "That was close!". *Das Rocks* is also on the line-up at the Ottawa Animation Festival. I can't wait to see it again, and if I'm lucky, perhaps the filmmaker Georg Gruber will be there so I can raise a glass of libation to his creative genius.
The final screening of the weekend contained exerpts from the top three animations in each of the competition categories. There was much applause and support for the winners. I have to admit that I was a little sad though, as this meant the festival was over. Ah well... I certainly had a ball. And there is always next year. The list of categories and winners can be found on the KAFI website listed below.

By now, I'm sure that those of you who could not attend are experiencing a bit of regret for missing the chance to view the great works screened at KAFI. If you live in west Michigan, you're in luck! The competition screening that played on Saturday evening at KAFI will be screened again at Grand Valley State University's Loosemoore Auditorium, on February 21, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.

Next year, the ASIFA retreat will take place at the KAFI festival, so it's double the pleasure! KAFI will take place again May 16, 17, and 18, 2003. Mark those dates on your calendar now, and plan to attend. If you'd like to be involved with next years festival, e-mail David Baker at kafi@kvcc.edu. For more info, check the website at www.kafi.kvcc.edu.

To my dismay, I did finish my last glass of wine three paragraphs ago...maybe there were one to many toasts this time around. That Shiraz goes down smooth and has left me with rosy cheeks and a rosy disposition. As I look at the bottle, I realize if I tilt it on it's side, I can see a sip of wine left in the bottom. I'll drain these last few drops for one final toast...Long Live KAFI!

Other News? Well, the next deadline is January 15, 2003. Jennifer will be back at the helm, and all will return to NORMAL! There's a bunch of goodies that didn't make it to this edition... so stay tuned!

UPCOMING FESTIVALS

OTTAWA / Canada - www.awn.com/ottawa/ottawa02 - October 2 to 6, 2002
BRISBANE / Australia - www.biaf.com.au - October 9 to 13, 2002
LEIPZIG / Germany - www.dokfestival-leipzig.de - October 15 to 20, 2002
GENZANO DI ROMA / Italy - www.castellianimati.it - October 23 to 27, 2002
ESPINHO / Portugal - www.cinanima.pt - November 4 to 10, 2002
UTRECHT / Holland - www.awn.com/haff - November 13 to 17, 2002
KAFI/Kalamazoo, in our own backyard – May 16, 17, and 18, 2003, www.kafi.kvcc.edu

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WINTER 2002

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

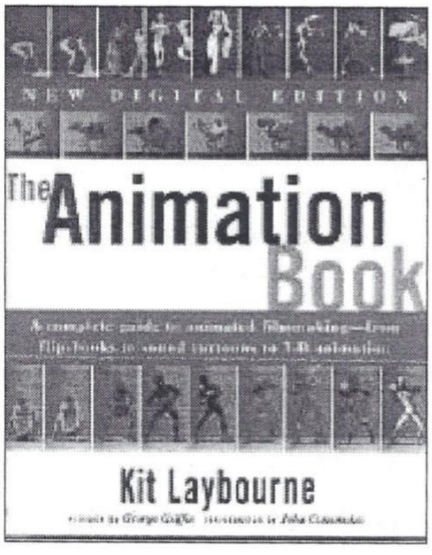
WINTER 2002

The Animator's Bookshelf

by Jim Middleton

A collection of books have been earning dog-eared pages on these bookshelves lately. Each one qualifies as essential reading for the animator and represent a variety of approaches to understanding the various theories and personalities that have developed the craft and art of animation.

The Animation Book, by Kit Laybourne, Second edition, 2000, $24.95



I love this book. In fact, I love this book in ways that are probably being investigated by the Bush administration. For years it was considered fashionable to toss a copy of the first edition my way at any gift exchange (pharmacist-animators being so hard to buy for); after a dozen copies piled up, I saved a pair for personal use and gradually dispersed the remainder. Now a new edition has been made available, considerably expanded and updated, and it is just as wonderful for the 21st century as its first pressing was for the late 1970s. A preface by George Griffin (whose video everyone needs), an introduction by John Canemaker (whose biography on McCay remains the ultimate coffee table book) just add to the aura that emanates from this 426 page work (and holy cow, it has a flip book on the even pages, too– is there no end to this tome's entertainment value?!)

When The Animation Book's first edition appeared in 1979, the craft was largely self-taught. And for one growing up in the suburbs of a town populated by beings more bovine than human, it offered comfort in demonstrating techniques that seemed inherently correct, but never completely discussed in a single published source–just what super 8mm camera was the best? How many frames-to-image delay could you deal with and maintain synchronization? What kind of exposure sheet is the best–or in my case, just what does an exposure sheet look like in the first place?

The 2000 edition discusses the digital challenges with just the same approach, offering case studies that duplicate the general challenges every new animator faces when confronted with a computer, a belligerent scanner, and several types of software that don't necessarily speak the same language. Photoshop is dissected, pixels are explored, everything is explained in a calm, soothing fashion as if to say, "yes, you're actually doing it right, and yes, it's normal for everything to crash and burn, and no, it isn't happening only to you."

Traditional film techniques are also discussed, if for nothing more than to impress upon the new student how

Animator's Bookshelf (Middleton) continued on 3

Inside this Issue

Animator's Bookshelf
Legality of Animation
and more ...

Greetings from the President *by Jim Middleton*

Well, it's just Jim. Middleton. That guy from Battle Creek. As I type these words, our Presididn't prepares for his State of the Union address.

Our State of the Animation is looking very interesting. After many years of quietly producing our own bits of invention, the Midwest has suddenly become a hotbed of seething,percoiating, exciting attention.

Animation classes are popping up like so many Stuckeys all along the I-94 corridor...the retreat in Chicago is going to be a blast in a new venue...Kalamazoo is playing host to a springtime festival...and Deanna Morse has gone DVD. It's a great time for cartoons in this palindromic 2002, and we're all here to see it happen.

As I sit back, swilling my instant cappuccino, I remember the days before electricity when animation was all flip books and zoetropes. The smell of Crayolas. The sharp point of a Gilliot 210. Now a solitary soul can create a masterwork on a laptop with more computer memory than existed when TRON was bombing at the box office. It's enough to make me go for seconds on the cappuccino.

One of the more intriguing changes I've experienced as your prez has been the email. And the virus (thank you, evil doers, I needed to format my hard-drive anyway). Upcoming columns will address some of the mail that has come in (that I haven't already forwarded you)--and if nobody else contributes, well, I'll just have to add more pontifications on my favorite topic of silent German abstract animation. You don't want to put Jennifer (our ever patient, ever suffering Jennifer) though the proofread of that now, do you?

Be well my dear friends: hug a loved one--and love a hugged one.

Animation Scholarship Available

Each year, the Haynes Storyboard & Animation Scholarship program awards a $1,000 grant to one qualified student attending an accredited college or university by sponsoring a Storyboard Competition.

The money, contributed by the family & friends of the late Helen Victoria Haynes - former bilingual teacher, musician and church activist - defrays the cost of producing an animated PSA based on the theme 'How We Can Achieve World Peace'. College students anywhere in the world are eligible. The deadline for applying with a Storyboard is March 15, 2002.

The winner will be announced in April. The winner is required to complete the PSA for screening at the 11th Annual Midwest Animators Conference in April 2003.

For an application with rules, send an email containing your postal address to: Program Director, HVH World Peace Storyboard & Animation Scholarship Competition morgpk@aol.com

ASIFA/Central Mission Statement
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ASIFA/Central Conference:
April 26 - April 28, 2002

To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

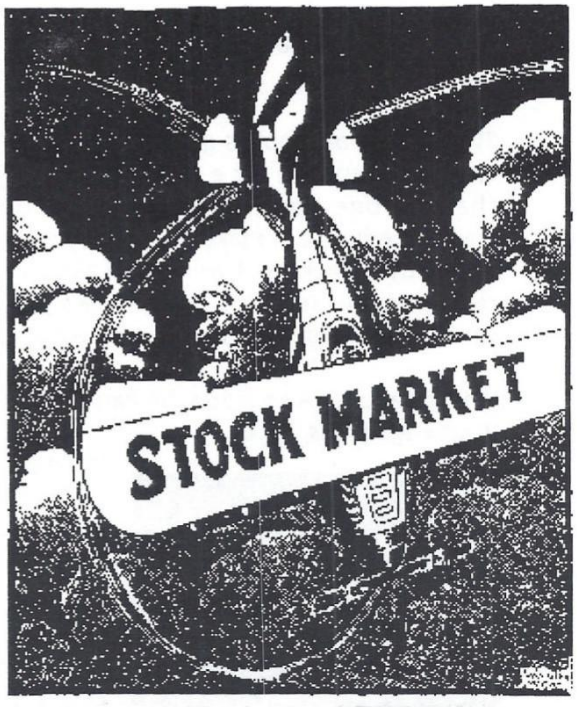
Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

The Editorial Cartoons of Winsor McCay *by Jim Middleton*

The prodigious output of Winsor McCay was matched only by its astonishing quality. Of his nearly million estimated illustrations created, many have reappeared in the six-volume set of Fantagraphic's Complete Little Nemo in Slumberland, and Daydreams and Nightmares, edited by Richard Marschall. This Michigan-raised wonder child wound up in New York, initially creating his magical wonderlands for the Hearst newspapers. By the 1920s, however, he was assigned an even more daunting task–making the editorial comments of Arthur Brisbane appear interesting. Taken out of context, these same illustrations were made available to other newspapers in the Hearst syndicate. As such, they made a twice weekly appearance in the Battle Creek Enquirer in 1925 and were discovered during research on the Kellogg family. They exist only in microfilm format.

It is frustrating to see this gifted pen being used for these mostly mundane assignments. At times their message is more akin to a "good citizenship" lecture for third graders than to the surreal dreams McCay conjured a decade before. Yet, occasionally, the old playfulness still emerges. A few rare specimens of these illustrations have seen print in Daydreams and Nightmares; perhaps more originals will emerge to breath freshness into these rapidly fading, poorly preserved artifacts from one of the world's first true animators.

JUST LOOPING THE LOOP.



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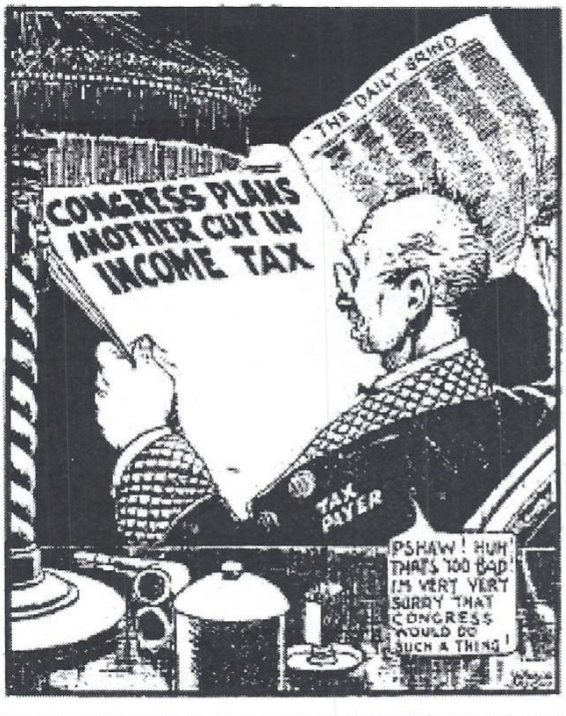

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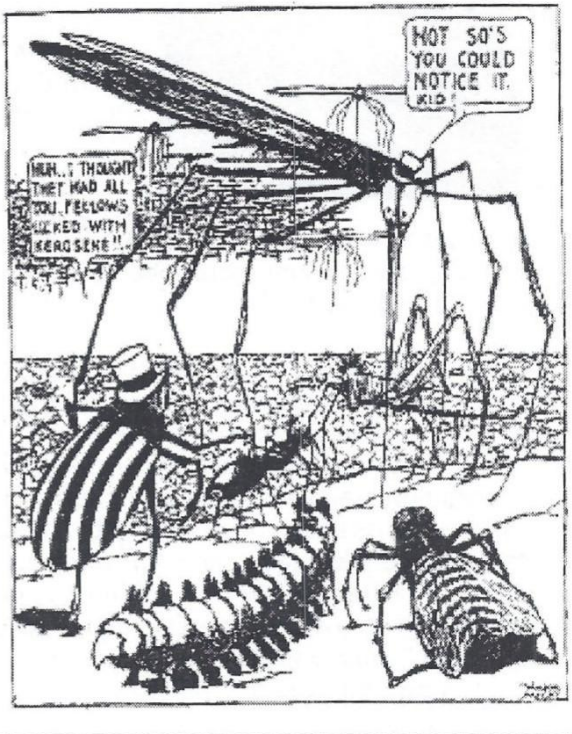
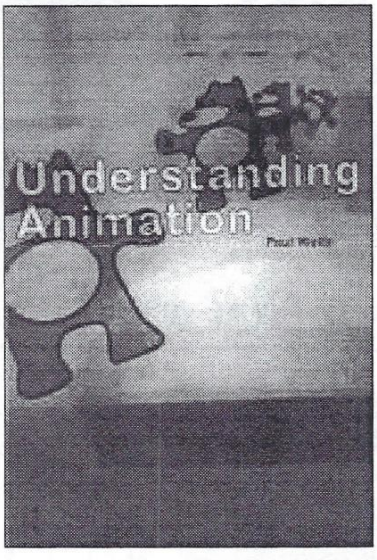


Animator's Bookshelf (Middleton) continued from 1

easy a computer has made many functions of animation, not the least of which is the budgetary disparity between the two media. And speaking of budgets, it even offers a discussion on how to create one for a particular project.

The Animation Book is great. Whenever I am asked to direct someone for a book on the subject, this is the first one I pull from the shelf. But it never leaves the house. I make people buy their own. And then buy a backup. I want Kit Laybourne to grow rich from selling this book. He's put a quarter century of his life into it and deserves every nickel.

Understanding Animation, by Paul Wells, Routledge Press, 1998



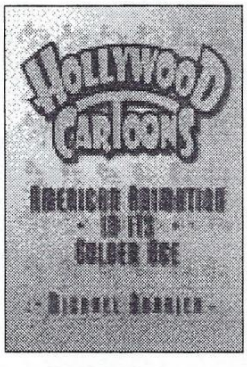
Written in the style of a textbook, Mr. Wells provides an incredible service with this volume. First, it is actually useful as a textbook, and as such offers a level of scholarship not generally associated with animation. Secondly, it is invaluable for those social gatherings where one's livelihood emerges as a topic and, surrounded by the likes of dentists, lawyers, and (gasp) pharmacists, you state you're an animator.

First of all, what you'd be doing with such a collection of dullards eludes the author of this piece, but for the sake of argument, you're in the midst of this difficult milieu...you merely whip out your cribbed notes, and Mr. Wells offers such statements as "the animator is at liberty to completely manipulate the image and create impossible and dynamic relations which need not have any connection with orthodox and anticipated relations." And while the dentists are reeling from that, you can toss in, "reality is necessarily subjective...since...the completely real becomes identified with the 'completely fake.'" And to finish off any pharmacists left standing, you dash off that animated film "will demonstrate diegetic appropriateness and correspond directly to the context from which it emerges." The gathering about you stands in slack-jawed amazement as you walk away toward the buffet and stuff yourself with cocktail weenies. You have to love the sort of ammo this book provides.

In addition to elevating your social standing far above such unworthy non-initiates, Understanding Animation poses theoretical discussions for each form of animation, then just as it appears to be getting a bit heavy on philosophy, tosses in a chapter entitled, "25 Ways to Start Laughing." While nearly parsimonious in its illustrations, the book does offer ways to develop a narrative strategy as well as determine your style in the context of the expected audience.

Once a general mastery of animation techniques has been obtained, and once the study of animation is more for relaxation than examination, then it is time for Understanding Animation. It isn't on my bathroom reading shelf at this point, but it is on the bedside nightstand.

Hollywood Cartoons, "American Animation in its Golden Age," by Michael Barrier, Oxford University Press, 1999, hardcover, $39.95 (much less at outlet stores or on the internet)



For years, if someone wanted to refer to an overview of the American animation industry, the primary source was Leonard Maltin's enthusiastic celebration of the genre in Of Mice and Magic (second edition 1987). Michael Barrier, publisher and editor of Funnyworld, has tackled the same subject with his 650 pages of Hollywood Cartoons, covering the industry from 1911 to 1966, the year of Walt Disney's death. Massive, detailed, comparatively Spartan in its graphics, it is the culmination of three decades'

Animator's Bookshelf (Middleton) continued on 6

10th Annual Midwest Animators Conference

Friday Apr 26 - Sunday Apr 28, 2002

REGISTRATION DATES
See the ASIFA/Central web site at http:/www.asifa.org/animate for registration information.

REGISTER NOW TO ENSURE YOUR SEAT!
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Call for Entries: 5th Brooklyn International Film Festival

May 7-12, 2002
Competitive film festival
http://www.brooklynfilmfestivalorg

Deadlines:
Late: Posted by January 15, 2002
Final: Posted by February 15, 2002
http://wbff.org/2002/submit/

Categories:
- Feature
- Experimental
- Documentary
- Short
- Animation

Awards: The best film will be awarded the "Grand Chameleon Award" ($30,000 in services)

Winners in each category will be awarded the "Chameleon" statuette
Q&A sessions / Panel Discussions / Live broadcast over the Internet

Venue:
Brooklyn Museum of Art

All formats accepted
Preview on *" non-returnable (VHS).

Contact:
Mario Pego,
Festival Programmer:
films@wbff.org

ENTRY FORM AND RULES AVAILABLE AT:
http://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org
Brooklyn International Film Festival
180 South 4th St., suite 2 South,
Brooklyn, New York 11211
ph: (718) 388 4306 ,
(718) 486 8181
fax: (718) 599 5039
films@wbff.org
http://www.brooklynfilmfestival.org

Animator's Bookshelf (Middleton) continued from 4

work and over 200 interviews with the great, near great, and day to day soldiers in the field. Barrier does a good job in keeping the players straight as they migrated from studio to studio, forming short-lived companies, struggling to survive during the fiscal and resource challenges of the Depression and WWII; how allies (Disney and nearly everyone else) became adversaries (again Disney and nearly everyone else), and how the industry gradually unraveled with the 1960s.

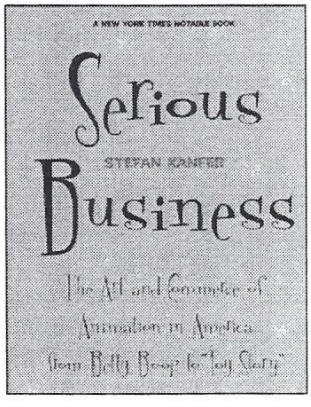
What sets the book apart from others on this shelf is its tone. Barrier takes the role of critical historian here, taking directors to task for apparently not doing enough for their craft. He seems especially unforgiving to Tex Avery for not abandoning the Disney influence, especially during his MGM years, and then for not maintaining the pace of his successful films once he began a style more his own. I watch Avery's MGM output with the astonishment that he was able to get drawing one past the limited grasps of producer Fred Quimby (who preferred the violence of Tom and Jerry to the introspection of Fischinger's Optical Poem). With painfully few exceptions, animators during the "golden age" were merely adequately paid artists with little resource (or encouragement) for self-expression. That they were able to create anything in the assembly line world of Hollywood's film industry is nothing short of phenomenal. I believe this book could go further in acknowledging that fact.

That minor criticism aside, there are a lot of interesting anecdotes and stories here, all nicely collated into a single volume, that until this publication had to be uncovered in a scattering of articles and books. Also, the near-forty dollar price tag is misleading. In this day of outlet malls and internet sales, it's going for less than a quarter of that price.

Serious Business, Stefan Kanfer, Scribner publishers, 1997, paperback $16.00

Stefan Kanfer is described by Chuck Jones as a "whimsical historian" in the foreword to this book, a reminder to us that nothing, not even the Golden Age of animation, exists in a vacuum. He explores the competitive nature of the industry, of the Fleischers' poor business sense, and the easily wounded sensibilities of Walt Disney, who was willing to pack it in and retire when the army took over his studio space at the start of WWII. Kanfer also reminds us that the world of animation is as much a business as an art, and that both are required for a studio to survive.

McCay had genius, but limited output. The Bray studios created assembly line mediocrity. Messmer designed and animated Felix, but his alcoholic boss Sullivan smashed the potential for giving the silent-era's cat a voice. Disney succeed with his well-timed appearance of Mickey just as the markets crashed in the 1920s. As for art, Disney's initial goals were to be merely as good as the latest Aesop's Fable. Those were animation's beginnings. Much of the book deals with the industry's struggles during the second world war and how Disney began to lose his magic "touch" after Bambi (in fact, Disney began to lose interest in expanding animation as an expressive art form after the expensive failure of Fantasia). World War II also serves as a reminder of the business aspect of the industry in Serious Business, as the European market represented a huge loss of revenue to the studios. Fred Quimby, that bastion of understanding, wanted his animators to go light on Hitler just in case he won. Similar tales were told of Leon Schlesinger, and even the Office of War Information pulled in the reins so as not to offend newly overrun nations with unpleasant caricatures.



This book is not all "ancient history," however. While it discusses the effect of McCarthy-era politics on the original Finian's Rainbow and the evolution of the Children's Television Workshop, it puts even the present resurgence of animation into perspective, perspective that seems even more prescient in the atmosphere of the most recent recession.

- Jim Middleton

WINTER 2003

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

Hiroshima 2002: The Spirit of Love and Peace *by Deanna Morse*

There was much praise for the 9th International Animation Festival in Hiroshima Japan. This year there were several familiar faces, but many new young filmmakers who had come to this festival for the first time. I talked with filmmakers from Australia, England, Turkey, France, Japan, Spain, Canada, and the USA. All agreed that Hiroshima is a great festival for animators: perfectly organized, with a wide range of interesting and diverse programs, and a rich environment with activities and opportunities to meet and greet other filmmakers in attendance. Several of these newcomers said since they were new to this field, they found it difficult to decide which festivals to enter. They had found the ASIFA guidelines helpful in finding the "important festivals," in selecting festivals that would respect and honor their work. They all were happy they had entered and attended Hiroshima, full of praise for this festival, which is one of the top International festivals for animation.

The festival runs five days at the end of August. Each day, there is constant programming in three theaters, and the competition films are screened every evening, ending with the closing award ceremony. There were six "Stars of Students" programs, tributes to Ub Iwerks, Ferenc Cako, Japanese Video Animation, Stoyan Dukov, the Hubleys, Saul Bass, and Zagreb Animation, among others. Additional displays of animation art and activities included an opportunity to make animation (Macintosh Animation Making World), screening and discussion (Frame In), and a children's animation workshop. My favorite special display was Animation and Meditation, a tatami room with pillows where one could partake in the traditional Japanese tea ceremony and then view, or meditate, while watching one of two installation pieces by American animator Paul Glabicki. Hungarian animator Ferenc Cako presented a performance during his screening - skillfully moving sand with his hands in time to music. Harking back to the vaudeville era and the early chalk-talks which were a precursor to animation, his hands disappeared as the images transformed on the screen from humans to trees to faces to abstracted patterns. At the closing ceremonies, festival director Sayoko Kinoshita asked if he would do another performance. The full house seemed transfixed during his musical-sand-hand performance, and they roared in applause as he metamorphosed his final images into the logo for Hiroshima 2002.

There are social activities most evenings: an ASIFA roof top beer party, a filmmaker's reception, and the lavish opening and closing ceremonies. This year the opening ceremony featured traditional Japanese music: the Koto and the Shamisen, and the closing ceremony featured Hawaiian hula dancers and steel guitar. Both featured fabulous food and drink.

On Saturday, festival guests boarded busses to see two famous sightseeing spots:

Hiroshima (Morse) continued on 3

Notes from the Light Board: Reorganizing the ASIFA

With the work of ASIFA being performed by dedicated volunteers, it's amazing at the number of activities that bear fruit through what must seem to be sheer willpower. At the International level, the structure has also been rather casual, so much so, in fact, that incoming board members could feel at a loss for their specific duties. ASIFA President Thomas Renolder has been pounding the pavements with a plan to give the International chapter a sense of design. At the recent Ottawa festival, as at other gatherings where ASIFA members congregate, he presented a plan to organize the executive board along the lines of a parliamentary system, with specific posts and specific duties. The parliament would represent all national and regional ASIFA groups, with each chapter or group sending one member. This parliament would then make major decisions, but more importantly, choose the executive board (rather than the present method of "at large" elections determining a membership from a roster of, often, relative strangers). The parliament members could then bring international news back to their respective chapters in a timelier manner. With the universal use of e-mail and the Internet, this method could be implemented with some degree of facility impossible even a decade ago. Specifically, the parliament would then choose: a president, a secretary, a parliament chairman, a treasurer, an editor for the ASIFA magazine and website, and a public relations manager. In addition, contacts could be determined for animation festivals, animation schools, and the major geographic regions around the globe.

What is surprising to me is not that this system is being presented, but that there isn't actually any such system in place now. The parliamentary system would allow for a greater communication of ideas among the International members, as well as create an environment for greater diversity on the executive board.

Thomas Renolder has been communicating with those who have relayed their thoughts on the proposal and is still conducting informational meetings to gather support for his plan. It is a long overdue concept worthy of serious consideration. More discussion on the topic can be read at www.asifa.net.

Speaking of volunteers, Jennifer is back in editorial control this time, so this boat should be back on track. We have KAFI coming in May, with a concurrent ASIFA Central retreat, so it should be another active springtime for the world of animation. See you in Kalamazoo!

Jim Middleton, ASIFA Central President

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ASIFA/Central Conference:
May, 2003

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Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A
on recycled paper.

ASIFA/Central Mission Statement
ASIFA: Association Internationale du Film d' Animation
The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. – adopted 3/1992

Hiroshima (Morse) from page 1

Kintai, the 300 year old wooden arched bridge in Iwakuni, and the island of Miyajima, famous for the Torii gates which appear to float in the sea at high tide. We ate an excellent traditional Japanese lunch at Iwaso, a famous traditional ryokan (hotel).

The festival takes place within the city of Hiroshima, a city that has dedicated itself to peace. The festival activities are just a block south of the informative and powerful Peace Museum and beautifully designed Peace Park. Nearby stand the remains of the Genbaku dome, one of the few buildings that was left standing when the atomic bomb was dropped. Registered as a world heritage site under UNESCO, the "Atomic Bomb Dome" is the ruins of a commercial exhibition hall designed by a Czech architect in 1915. Unlike much of Japan, Hiroshima is new - rebuilt after the atomic blast. The skeletal shell of this historical building serves as a reminder of the devastation of war, and the incredible potential destruction of atomic bombs.

The animation festival, founded in 1985, is dedicated to "Love and Peace." But this goal is not narrowly defined by the content of films. The goal is that through animation we can show cultural differences and viewpoints and work to achieve a mutual understanding of those differences.

This year, the Grand Prize, and also the audience prize, went to Michael Dudok De Witt for "Father and Daughter," a film that garnered top awards at many international festivals this past year. Twenty other films were also awarded prizes. But the real award is just to be selected for screening at the festival - in or out of competition.

This year, a record number of 1438 animations from 54 countries were entered into the competition, and the selection committee worked for three weeks to choose the 73 films that were included in the competition screenings. In the festival catalog, the chairperson of the selection committee, Amy Kravitz, explained how the committee approached making this deep cut. "Is this a film which will become more interesting each time it is screened? Does the film have a central idea, a heartbeat? Is the animation appropriate to the central idea? Is the filmic structure strong? Is the animation strong? Is it an intelligently made film? Does it communicate in a genuine way? Has the filmmaker transformed the materials of the craft into something greater than they were before? Does the film have vision, humor, beauty, or even ugliness that is sincere and unique? Each day we look for treasures for which the answers to these questions are 'yes'."

Festival director, Sayoko Kinoshita, expressed her optimism for the future of animation, which was evident in the programming of so many student works this year. Seeing these films, you are reminded of how much great animation is being created around the world, by individual creators expressing their own voice. The Hiroshima festival is one of the few places we have an opportunity to view such a diverse international perspective, to experience so much personal animation. There were many strong voices. There was rich and skillful imagery. Many films were powerful. It is a time for optimism, indeed.

Hope to see you in Hiroshima in 2003!

Deanna Morse is an animator and professor at Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI, USA. She has attended the past three Hiroshima festivals, and served on the selection committee in 1996. She is currently treasurer of ASIFA/Central.

KAFI Preliminary Information
ASIFA members get 20% off the $100 full ticket price (80 bucks)
or 20% off of a $40 day pass ($32 bucks).

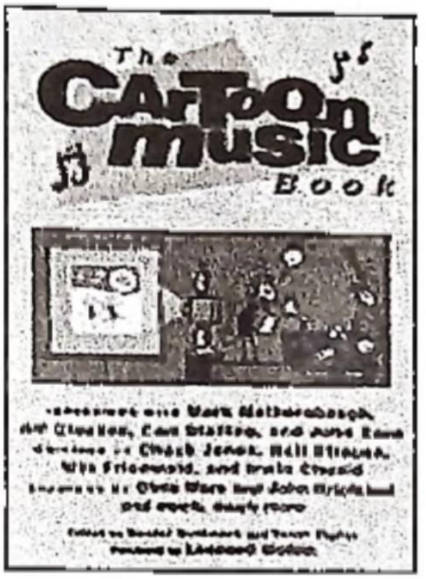
Students are of course $50 bucks for the weekend which is half price or $20 bucks for the day.

Plus there are many free events during the day for the mildly curious or fiscally challenged.

ASIFA Central Retreat
More information on the concurrent ASIFA Central retreat will be forthcoming, both by email, snail mail, and newsletter.

Notes on CARTOON MUSIC, edited by Daniel Goldmark and Yuval Taylor, A capella books, $18.95

The recent Supreme Court decision to validate the "Bono" copyright extension made this book's brief appearance at a local Barnes and Noble somewhat timely.



Disney, the main benefactor of this new extension copyright (effectively guaranteeing that Mickey Mouse shall remain unscathed until the next extension 20 years hence), made its name back when the company meant the Man, for having synchronized a bouncing mouse to tunes specifically chosen for their public-domain status. Had this ruling existed in 1928, Steamboat Willie might have had to remain a silent film, and the ensuing corporate giant would have just been another tragic fatality of the Great Depression.

But Disney had access to public domain music, even if aspiring animators today do not have the same opportunity, and he early on had the benefit of another Kansas City resident to help compose many of his subsequent scores--Carl Stalling.

In fact, when it comes to music for animation, Carl Stalling is one of the few quickly recognized names, and by extension, his inspired, purchased arrangements of Raymond Scott. Beyond that, few names enter the circle of common currency.

The Cartoon Music Book brings some of these unsung heros (well, sometimes they were sung) to light in a series of essays and interviews. Carl Stalling himself discusses his reminiscences with Disney, Iwerks, and Warner's. Mark Motherspaugh discusses his delight at the instant gratification of composing for cartoons, rather than the extended wait for response while performing new music for Devo. The book concludes with an overview of the re-emergence of the genre of composing for animation by other members of Devo and Oingo Boingo. Chris Ware and John Kricfalusi toss in a scattering of drawings to flesh out this paperback.

The episodic nature of the book, however, lends itself to repetition, and there are a scattering of errors of fact and omission--Walt Disney can't seem to make up his mind whether he died in 1966 or 1967, Max Flesicher is credited with The Sinking of the Lusitania (it was Winsor McCay at the pen for that classic), and no mention of Oskar Fischinger is made for his contribution to the notion of synchronized abstract animation with classical music, or his significant assistance to the Disney feature Fantasia.

However, even for these transgressions, the book is fun, offers a few new insights on the tasks of composing for a cartoon, and could make a nice surprise for the enthusiast in your life.

Review by Jim Middleton

Chicago Area Animators Form New Organization

A group of Chicago area animators have formed a new organization to provide a venue for an exchange of ideas and techniques, particularly in the growing field of digital animation. Chicago Area Toon Novices and Professionals (CATNAP) started after several meetings that were held at a local animation studio. The group agreed that there is a need for students and professionals to discuss common issues, screen and critique work, and share information on various tools and techniques they use.

CATNAP's monthly meetings provide attendees with an opportunity to socialize and network, as well as hone their skills in the business of animation through various presentations and speakers. The group has set their 2003 meeting schedule to coincide with a collaborative production of a short animation. Each meeting topic will cover a specific aspect of animation production, including funding and distribution. The group hopes to bring in outside speakers from the industry to supplement the expertise of group members. A CATNAP web site is also under development.

CATNAP meetings are held the third Saturday of each month beginning at 1 PM at the studios of Itoons, 3717 N. Ravenswood, Suite 210 in Chicago (schedule attached). For more information please contact Kevin Larson at 773-573-1103.

CATNAP 2003 MEETING SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC
JAN 18	Story idea/concept
FEB 15	Pitch and Funding
MAR 15	Script/Development
APR 19	Visual Development (storyboards, etc.)
MAY 17	Voice talent (casting and direction)
JUN 21	Timing breakdown/background layouts
JUL 19	Posing/key animation
AUG 16	Cleanup/tween painting/paint layouts
SEP 20	Scan paint composites
OCT 18	Sound design (music and sound effects
NOV 15	Post production
DEC 13*	Distribution

CATNAP is looking for area media professionals interested in presenting on any of the above topics. Please contact Kevin Larson at Itoons at 773-573-1103 or email him at kevin@itoons.net.

*note: 2nd Saturday of the month

Highlights from the KAFI festival to be shown in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Friday February 21st 7 pm
Loosemore Auditorium, De Vos Center, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids MI

David Baker will introduce a program of highlights from KAFI 2002: the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International. The program promises to include edgy, contemporary and fun animation from the 2002 festival. (That festival was reviewed favorably by Melissa Bouwman in our past newsletters.)

This year ASIFA/Central retreat will coincide with the KAFI 2003 festival.

Shake out that cabin fever and come to an evening of animation winners.

Free! Fun! Tell your friends!

For more information contact:
Deanna Morse morsed@gvsu.edu
or David Baker dbbaker@kvcc.edu

SPRING 2003

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

SPRING 2003

Three days in May – KAFI 2003

by Dave Baker

Animation as entertainment, education, employment and art will again be in the spotlight here when the second Kalamazoo Animation Festival International (KAFI) is staged the weekend of May 16-18.

As with the inaugural event last May, animators with ties to major companies that produce full-length films and shorts for movie houses and cartoon networks will gather in Southwest Michigan, along with both professionals in the field and students honing their creative skills, to turn downtown Kalamazoo into "Toon Town" for three days.

In the 2002 KAFI, audiences of over 2000 viewed more than 200 student and professional animation entries from nine nations – India, France, Germany, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, China, and throughout the United States who entered juried competition and vied for $15,000 in prize money. That same amount of prize money will be available in the 2003 edition, plus $4,000 in scholarships for the winners of KAFI You'll unique "Cartoon Challenge."

Those testing their "under-the-gun" animation talents in the "Cartoon Challenge" came to the Southwest Michigan community prior to the festival to create a 30-second production. The teams didn't know the topic – the arts for youngsters should be as fundamental as the three R's – until the week-long competition began.

The audience at a special screening will select the winner of "Cartoon Challenge II" as one did at the first KAFI, while a jury of professionals will pick the team recipients of the $4,000 in scholarships. May 12-16 are the dates for the second "Challenge."

There are four categories of competition in the 2003 KAFI – animation schools, commercial productions, independent animators, and students. Over $15,000 in cash and awards will be distributed to the student and independent finalists helping these artists continue exploring the reaches of animated expression.

Among the KAFI's other attractions are a free two-hour showing of cartoons dating from the 1920s through the 1960s, a panel discussion about violence in animation, and "Animation for Mature Audiences" with 'no-holds-barred," R-rated content that offer different perspectives on the human condition.

One at the start of the festival (May 16) will be a one-day seminar for animation instructors at the college and high-school levels. Sessions will target the teaching of traditional animation,

KAFI (Baker) continued on 3

Two New Animation Groups Debut in Chicago

By Dave Daruszka

Despite a current dearth of work in the Chicago animation community, two new groups have formed to promote a stronger sense of community among local animators and students.

CATNAP (Chicago Area Toon Novices and Professionals) meets monthly at the studios of itoons, an internet and multimedia animation production company. The group has embarked on the collaborative production of a short animation to promote the group for the internet. To coincide with this production process, each monthly meeting features a speaker who addresses a topic on a specific aspect of animation production. The February meeting featured a talk by Trish Lindsay of Star Farm about marketing intellectual properties. The March meeting will feature screenwriter Michael Kramer. The meetings also include time for networking and screenings. The group also has a web site at www.itoons.net/catnap. For more information contact Kevin Larson at kevin@itoons.net, or call him at 773-573-1103. A new Chicago Chapter of Women in Animation has also formed recently. Their mission is to aid in building a strong community of animators in both the commercial and artistic sectors. They plan to do this through organized events that will include lectures, critiques and demos. They also hope to provide mentoring opportunities for animation artists at all levels to develop professional relationships and enhance existing skills. They are currently scheduled to meet every other month, and are searching for a permanent meeting location.

A number of committees have been formed, and they have begun effort to raise funds through t-shirts sales. A launch party for the group is planned for June 7th. For more information contact Paloma Boiles at paloma@stroboscopia.com, or call her at 773-489-2222. The Women in Animation International web site is located at www.womeninanimation.org.

ASIFA/Central Volunteers and Project Leaders

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ASIFA/Central Conference:
May 16-18, 2003

To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A
on recycled paper.

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teaching animation via computers, and job skills valued by the animation industry. The Educators Conference will include heavy hitters in the animation world like Ellen Besen of Sheridan College Fame and now the Animated Genome Project, Maxine Schacker from Max the Mutt animation school, Frank Terry from Cal Arts, Karen Sullivan from Ringling School of Art and Design, Linda Simensky from the Cartoon Network along with our own Deanna Morse from GVSU. Preregistration for the conference is required and due by May 1, 2003.

Also featured is the Helen Victoria Hayes World Peace Storyboard Contest which will be announcing its 2003 winner at KAFI on Sunday night. The principals of the event will be showing previous winners of the contest on a continuous tape loop and art exhibit at the Epic Center on the festival site.

The festival, regarded as the first of its kind in the Midwest, was organized by Kalamazoo Valley Community College with the assistance of Downtown Kalamazoo Inc., the Arts Council of Kalamazoo, and the community's Education for the Arts program. Funding and support for the second festival will again be provided by the college, the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Monroe-Brown Foundation, Lawrence Productions, and WWMT Channel 3, WKFR and others.

After the second KAFI in the spring of 2003, it will shift to becoming a biennial event in 2005.

Nuts-and-bolts information about the KAFI events and activities, the "Cartoon Challenge," submission guidelines, deadlines, prizes and awards, and other details is available at this web page: http://kafi.kvcc.edu. David Baker, the festival's director and an animation instructor at KVCC, can be contacted at extension 269.488.4520 or dbbaker@kvcc.edu.

Tickets and Housing
Full Festival Passes are $80 for ASIFA members. You can buy tickets online and pick them up at the festival site on May 16-18. Other ticket prices are available on the web site.

KAFI has set up special rates of $65 a night for ASIFA members at Holiday Inn west, a short drive from Downtown Kalamazoo. We have 50 rooms on reserve for the festival so reserve early!!! The rooms are released to the public on April 15. Their number is 1-269-375-6000. Tell them you are with the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International for special rates.

A Message from the Director:
This year the success of the festival will hinge on attendance. Last year, KAFI 2002 was created as a template or dress rehearsal, for this year. The foundations funding KAFI will be watching to see if interest in animation can sustain a world-class festival of this scope and vision. It is important that those that love animation and practice it show support this year in the festival for its carry over into future years.

How often do we have an opportunity to really impact the future of animation in the Midwest? KAFI was created to give a voice to the student and independent animator. Your attendance and support of KAFI 2003 is vitally important.

In an effort to draw interest from professionals in the Midwest, KAFI is offering a weekend pass to ASIFA members for $80. When compared to many festivals, this is an awesome deal! Don't miss out on a fantastic weekend. Be a part of living art!

Thank you!
David Baker

More on KAFI . . .

Competitions:

Star Search
Animated films worldwide will in be our view ports as we search for the future stars in the animation universe. Among the cosmos of cartoons, these creations from around the globe will point the way to the future of animation. Be prepared to engage!

Friday, 8 pm, State Theater
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Over the Top - Mature Audiences
Animation allows us to explore ideas and themes like no other media. The "Over the Top" show celebrates these views "no holds barred". Many entries might not be something you want your 11 year old to see, but are still great films. The

KAFI (Baker) continued on page 5

ASIFA/Central Retreat 2003

by Jim Middleton

OK, we have KAFI coming, and that means we're in full ASIFA Central RETREAT!

The three days in Kalamazoo are crammed with activities as it is, so finding times for convenient gathering moments will be a challenge. In full expectation that these things will change at the last minute, here's our tentative itinerary. There will be an ASIFA Central meeting room assigned to us at the KVCC Arcadia building downtown "a real live hospitality room" so these gatherings will be there. In addition, last minute changes, postings, musings, or panic attacks will be posted near there as well.

We're ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS. If you're a poor starving college student, WE HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU ENJOY YOURSELF, even if it will ruin your reputation as a cranky, misunderstood artiste type. Contact me! JimMiddleton! jimmiddleton@juno.com Contact our Deanimatrice Deanna! morsed@gvsu.edu We're looking for people to help staff the hospitality suite (actually, just to watch that nobody makes off with the VCR) while the room is otherwise unattended, and to help get ASIFA IDs together to WEAR WITH PRIDE at the festival...

These events feature ASIFA dudes and dudettes, and if I've forgotten someone I apologize, but poor Jennifer has been waiting patiently for me to get this stuff done and I'll be darned if I'm missing another episode of Futurama (the only thing that keeps me going some Sundays, believe me). As KAFI approaches, there will be more emails and cards coming your way. BEWARE!

FRIDAY, May 16

6pm: Helen Victoria Haynes World Peace Storyboard Competition – State Theatre

7pm: Informal gathering for all members KVCC Hospitality Room- Executive members please attend! Open screening time!

10pm (or later, depending on when competition screenings subside at the State): More open screening time! Bring your Works In Progress. Bring your Works In Semi-Completion!

SATURDAY, May 17

8am: General Meeting "Where have we gone, what have we done, where will we do it again?"

6pm: Helen Victoria Haynes World Peace Storyboard Competition – State Theatre

5pm: Networking Picnic "Bell's" it's open to all KAFI attendees, but that doesn't mean ASIFA can't play LIKE A BUNCH OF YEEEEHAARR animals!

7pm: More open screenings at the KVCC Hospitality Room

10pm: Still more screenings! Again, we're feeling Hospitable!

SUNDAY, May 18

8am: Afterglow meeting, general discussions, eating the leftovers, you know, the exhaling begins, final opportunity to swap business cards, addresses, phone numbers, fake IDs...AND THE OBLIGATORY DISPERSAL OF DOOR PRIZES! How could I have forgotten THAT!

Noon: Jim babbles about sound at the EPIC center

2pm: Deanimation Morse brings up the joys of DVD production, also at the EPIC center

4-6pm: Open screenings

For the complete series of events coming down the pike, be sure to check out the KAFI web site, www.kafi.kvcc.edu . Maps to downtown Kalamazoo are there as well. We are fortunate in that all of the primary programs are within a three-block walking distance of each other and that downtown Kalamazoo is jammed with great places to meet and eat. Or not eat meat.

If you have ANY QUESTIONS or CONCERNS about the feeble itinerary above, please feel free to contact me. Jim Middleton. That ever-procrastinating bozo in the Surreal City. Email: jimmiddleton@juno.com, phone (before 10pm, pretty please) 269-963-4945. I know I have been swamped with the usual endless stream of activities here in Battle Creek lately, and have been horribly remiss in behaving like a living entity, but this event is going to be soooo much fun, and after the experiences of the past year, believe me, I need soooo much fun. Let's play! Let's play until we ALL NEED A NAP, and THEN LET'S DREAM ABOUT CARTOONS!

Also, there are still limited numbers of discounted rooms available for KAFI visitors. Contact Dave

ASIFA/Central Retreat (Middleton) continued on 5

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Baker for specifics. His email: dbbaker@kvcc.edu.

And DOOR PRIZES? You want to know about DOOR PRIZES? Well, let's look in this little bag of tricks here – there's the infamous Hollywood Cartoons, a pair of Simpsons watches, some candy of indeterminate vintage, a collection of VHS tapes including Fleischer's Gulliver's Travels, books on After Effects and Lightwave, a build-it-yourself Zoetrope, and a Disney trivia game that NOBODY will play with me here in Battle Creek (if it doesn't have trucks or mud wrestling, I just can't seem to stimulate interest). And that's all I can dig out without scaring the dog. Give me a chance to clean out the basement, and you'll have so much ballast by the time you leave Kalamazoo that you'll have to get industrial shocks.

And that, my darlings, is my bedtime story for now.
Sweet dreams.
Jim Middleton

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"Over the Top" anthology are official entries and many are in final competition.

3 pm Saturday
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Cirque De Ani
Like an international 3 ring circus, KAFI is proud to present some of the best-animated films from independents around the world. May we draw your attention to the center ring where death-defying illusions are performed in a dizzying kaleidoscope of color and sound! Also, come and vote for your favorite "Cartoon Challenge" short as we review the week that was during this world-renowned event!

8 pm Saturday
Tickets $10 regular - 5 student rush with ID

The Next Generation
KAFI's mission is to promote new talent and help give direction to the upcoming generation of animators. These films, primarily from the student categories, mark the start of many animators, careers. Come enjoy the youthful energy and insight these films provide.

1 pm Sunday
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

The Winners Circle
KAFI's judges for 2003 have chosen these entries as exceptional and deserving of special recognition. We will unveil the Bronze, Silver and Gold Award winners of all the entered categories. We will also celebrate the Cartoon Challengers and reveal the winners of the Public Vote and the Judges Choice for the Cartoon Challenge 2003 Scholarship Award. Also, we will announce the winner of the 2003 Helen Victoria Hayes World Peace Storyboard Competition entries.

6 pm Sunday
Tickets $10 regular - Free student rush with ID

Seminars

Peter Adamakos: The Golden Age of Disney Animation: DISNEY PERSPECTIVES
DISNEY PERSPECTIVES, a talk that will make you rethink your preconceived ideas on what Disney has meant to animation over the years. We will be including a question and answer period. Find out what made Walt Disney who he was and how his life changed the history of animation. 10 am Friday

Peter Adamokos of Disada Productions is bringing its enthusiasm for animation to the Kalamazoo. The animation production company has promoted animation for over 30 years through exhibitions, retrospective screenings and talks.

Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Mike Belzer Puppet Seminar:
Walt Disney animator Mike Belzer (The Nightmare Before Christmas, Dinosaur, James and the Giant Peach) will be presenting key principals for stop motion animation, from making basic wire armatures to animating. This extraordinary seminar will bring you into the world of the animator – from the creation of both traditional and computer models to on the set of a full length stop motion-animated film. Mikes candid behind the scenes look will help shed light on this mysterious realm.

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Kellogg Community College Contemplates Animation Program *by Jim Middleton*

OK, so Disney is cutting staff by 30%, the industry seems to be tanking, and the only drawing we can manage is for placards reading WILL ANIMATE FOR FOOD. Naturally, this means academy will catch the wave and add more animation programs. Well, it may not be deferment-worthy, but just think how we can entertain the troops! (as an aside, I've been getting recruitment letters again lately, after a lull of nearly ten years...if you could imagine me in a uniform, you can see how these guys must be pretty hard up...)

Kellogg Community College recently approached some ASIFA ne-er do well, some local foole who is in mid-degree for curriculum development, to work out the bugs for an animation program, with an associate's level training...after a few gallons of coffee, the following appeared on his bedroom floor, as if created by invisible hands working in mysterious ways (doesn't that conjure up an image, too?). KCC is just completing the final touches on its new tech center, featuring a 24-unit Mac G4 network and a second lab with six individual dual-processor G4 Macs for the purposes of graphic design-and that means animation, too!

Just look at this:

First Semester

ANI 101	2D Animation (2D or not 2D?) - this will be using Flash and Final Cut, among other platforms
ART 110	Drawing
ART 222	Introduction to Photography
ENG 161	Freshman Composition
ART 105	Contemporary Art Survey
ART 103	3D Design

Second Semester

ANI 102	3D Computer Design (Maya got the bid for this MAC network platform)
ART 114	Figure Drawing (volunteers?)
ART 223	Intermediate Photography
ART 215	4D Studio Art Seminar - Mixed Media/Performance Art
ART 210	History of Photography and Film (gee, maybe some nice ANIMATION HISTORY TOOOOO!)
ANI 103	Intro Video Art (emphasis on storyboards)

Third Semester

ANI 201	Intermediate Animation
ART 227	Digital Color Photography
ART 216	4D Studio Art Seminar II
ANI 104	Intro Audio Editing
COM 241	Mass communications

Fourth Semester

ANI 202	Advanced Animation Techniques (integrative animation production)
ART 224	Advanced Photography
ENG 205	Elements of Script Writing
COM 111	Business Communication
PEC 121	Healthy Life Styles
MATH 130	Balancing your checkbook, intro to production cost overruns

This escapade will be a total of 65 credits, and looks like it may mesh as a 2 + 2 program with at least one 4-year Michigan institute. But those negotiations are still ongoing. We'll keep you posted on the evolution of this beast.

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1 pm Saturday, 10 am Sunday
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Ellen Besen: The Animated Genome Project.
Great animated films are made from many tiny parts. Some of these parts are easily spotted by the naked eye; others are so skillfully embedded in a films structure that they are virtually invisible. Join Ellen Besen as she places some of the great classics of animation under the microscope and reveals their secret inner workings.

10 am Saturday Kalamazoo Valley Museum
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

John Fountain: Story boarding
A young man from Michigan grows up to find himself in the midst of the Hollywood animation world. After stints at Klasky Csupo, Nickelodeon and now a Director at Disney, John will tell how he storyboards for the majors.

3 pm Saturday Kalamazoo Valley Museum.
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Ed Hooks – Acting for Animators
Animators perceive and apply acting theory in a different way than do stage actors. Ed Hooks, author of "Acting for Animators", has pioneered acting workshops that are specifically designed for the needs of the animator. Workshops are available on a one-day or two-day format. Each consists of lecture, simple improvisations and deconstruction of clips from films. Hooks will not try to make stage actors out of your animators. He will teach them acting theory in a fun, painless and useful way.

9 am, 11am 1 pm, 3 pm Friday
9 am, 11 am, 1 pm, 3 pm Saturday API theater
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Rick Kraas – Internet Marketing Strategies
3 pm Friday, 3 pm Saturday KVCC – ACC
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Brian Lemay: Drawing for Animation.
This seminar will cover the concepts and principles behind animation. Drawing from his book, "Animation Drawing Made Amazingly Simple," Lemay will review topics such as character design, layout, and perspective Bring your sketchbook and pencils for this "master class" from one of the most insightful animation instructors in the industry.

9am Friday, 9 am Saturday at Wellspring.
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Dave Master - Tapping into Professional Feedback in Your Own Classroom
We all know how difficult it is to get professional feedback as students develop their films, portfolios & projects. Dave Master reveals how educators can have their classroom tapped into on-going feedback via the internet as they work with students towards meeting the expectations of the professional world. It is a unique professional networking opportunity.

3 pm Epic Center Classroom Saturday
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Dave Master - The Importance of Professional Feedback and Building Your Portfolio
Wouldn't you like the opportunity to get professional feedback about your work & portfolio before you send it to a studio for review, and while you were still in school? Dave Master presents what the portfolio expectations are in the studio system today. He will also demonstrate the ACME internet program that provides students with on-going professional feedback as they build their portfolio, films and projects.

3 pm Epic Center Atrium Sunday.
Free to the Public

Jim Middleton - A Sound Theory
The attraction inherent in sound plays well with the concept of experimental and independent animation. The session will survey the evolution of songs importance, beginning with the so-called "silent era" (which never was silent). Through the experimental work of Oscar Fischinger in Europe and the United States, and how their imagery influenced the subsequent works of Saul Bass and Alfred Hitchcock. Since cost-

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consciousness independent animators often have difficulty in tracking down music, domain material will be discussed, with a demonstration of how to put it to use in the creation of abstract film.

12 - noon Sunday Epic Center Classroom.
Free to the Public

Deanna Morse: Electronic Portfolio and DVD:
Deanna Morse, award-winning animator and educator from Grand Valley State University, will be showing her newly released DVD project, "Click, Move, Click." How does today's media artist show his/her work? Featuring more than 20 projects and hundreds of production photographs and notes, Morse's "Electronic Museum" raises the bar on what a portfolio can be. Not just entertainment, this project is useful in teaching and instructing people on animation and its many forms. EFA classroom in the Epic Center Atrium. Free to the public.

3-5 p.m... Friday; 10 to noon Saturday.
2 pm Sunday Epic Center
Free to the Public

Dale Myers: Expert Advice on Breaking into the Business
Dale Myers will give expert advice on what paths entrepreneurs and students can take to get into the animation business. Far from being a straight line to stardom, a career in animation takes years to develop. What are the best ways of using your time? What does an employer want to see in a demo reel or portfolio? What connections should you make to further your career.

Learn how Myers, a Michigan animation artist did it with this intriguing seminar. He has succeeded in creating a 3-D studio that has collaborated with the Will Vinton Studios, creators of M & M commercials and the famous California Raisins. Myers, seminar is based on his outstanding book, "Computer Animation: Expert Advice on Breaking Into the Business". This talk will help guide you to making intelligent decisions in the competitive arena.

Friday 1-2:30 p.m... at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Tina Seemann: Line of Action – From Life Drawing to Animated Character.
Using life drawing as a base, Seemann of the Max the Mutt Animation School in Toronto, will bring new appreciation about the links between life drawing and animated characters. Her seminar is developed from her more than 20 years of experience producing animation and teaching aspiring animators. Both animation students and professionals will learn something new from this studio experience. Bring your sketchbook!

1 pm Friday, 1 pm Saturday Wellspring
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Ray Pointer: The Fleischer Studios.
Presented by Ray Pointer of Inkwell Images. The Fleischer Studios were the alternative creators of animation's golden age of the 30s and 40s. It produced "Popeye", "Betty Boop" and "Superman" cartoon shorts, and the feature length "Gulliver's Travels". This New York studio broke new ground in many animation technologies, as 3-D backgrounds, rotoscoping and mature themes were the realm of the Fleischer brothers.

Friday at the State Theater 1 pm - 2:30 , Saturday at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, 3 to 4:30 p.m..
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

A Compressed Course in Video Compression
So how do you put video on a CD-ROM? Why does a DVD work on your computer, but not someone else's? What's all that fuzzy stuff around the edges of the people in my video? Dave Valko of Digital Video Services will help demystify the spooky world of video compression.

3pm Saturday KVCC-ACC
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

3DS Max "Character Modeling" Benjamin Slack:
One of the top 3-D applications will be driven by one of the areas most experienced 3DS Max artists, Ben Flack. 3DS MAX's unique "procedural" animation techniques are used to produce the majority of video games today. Ben will be taking you on a tour of this application and how it excels in modeling for gaming and animation. Take notes, or just sit back and see his wizardry at work.

10 am Friday, 10 am Saturday KVCC-ACC.
Sponsored by Discreet.
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

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Lightwave 3D Workshop: Jim and John Jongsma
Two remarkable artists converge on KVCC's Arcadia Commons campus Friday and Saturday to give "Lightwave 3-D" a workout. This very powerful 3-D animation application seen recently used in such shows as the Star Trek Voyager series and "Jimmy Neutron, Boy Wonder," will amaze you with its powerful modeling, animating and rendering capabilities. Pick up tips from Glimpses Essential and get a better understanding of how Hollywood does what it does.

1 to 2:30 pm Friday and Saturday KVCC - ACC
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

MAYA - Exploration into 3D
Explore the magical world of MAYA - A 3D animation application found within the wall of many of the major animation studios. Find out what makes MAYA what it is by Bill Dwelly, a leading trainer of Alias/Wavefront products, Seneca College of Toronto, Canada.

3 pm Friday, 3 pm Saturday KVCC-ACC
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Bill Dwelly is an Alias/Wavefront certified Maya instructor. Before coming to Seneca College, Bill spent three years at Alias/Wavefront in the Technical Support and then Education departments.

While in Technical Support Bill assisted studios develop effects for feature films such as X-Men, The Patriot and Hollow Man. While in the Education department Bill was a contributing writer for The Art Of Maya, Learning Maya: Character Rigging and Animation, and the Maya Rendering Courseware Set, and he was the co-author of the Exploring Advanced ShadinTechniques
CD-ROM. Bill also conducted the evaluation and certification of prospective Maya instructors. As well as teaching Maya at the Digital Media Centre, Bill is working on the next Chris Landreth film "RYAN" which is a co-production between Seneca, The National Film Board and 49th Parallel currently being
produced at the Digital Media Centre.

Bill has presented seminars as part of the Masters of Maya series at SIGGRAPH and 3Deck.

Introduction to Photoshop
This introductory seminar is designed to kick-start you in the use of the most used photo enhancing software in the world. Find out what Photoshop can do for you! Learn basic principals like layering and masking and how you too can blend and retouch photos like the pros.

10 pm Friday, 10 pm Saturday KVCC-ACC
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

After Effects:
Adobe will lead you in a fun-filled tour of this world-renowned application. Many motion graphics you see on TV and in the movies are created with this Adobe application that has taken the motion-graphics world by storm. Before "After Effects", only a select few could create high-end animated graphics. This application brings this realm, only once provided an elite few, to any desktop computer artist.

1 pm Friday1 pm Saturday KVCC-ACC
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Flash
Join KVCC instructor Marty Webber as he demonstrates the most popular web animation application today, Macromedia Flash. Not only used for the Web, Flash has found its way into the hearts and palettes of many film and video animators too with its modest entry price, quick rendering and professional results.

3 pm Friday 3 pm Saturday KVCC-ACC
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Web Page Basics
An introduction to the construction and development of web pages. Web page basics will show you what is going on behind the pixels and how you can access them. KVCC's own Ravi Akoor, an instructor and developer for many Fortune 500 companies will be your guide through the gossamer world of web pages.

1 pm - 2:30 Friday, 1 pm- 2:30 Saturday KVCC-ACC
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

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Art Shows

The Golden Age of Disney Animation
After some 30 years of curating animation art and artifact exhibitions, Disada Productions brings one of its most popular ones to the Kalamazoo... Titled THE GOLDEN AGE OF DISNEY ANIMATION (1928-1940), the exhibition consists of rare original drawings and artifacts. Starting with the first Mickey Mouse cartoon, Steamboat Willie, continuing through the Silly Symphony cartoon shorts, you'll meet your favorite characters like Donald Duck, Goofy, The Three Little Pigs and Ferdinand the Bull in their original art forms. Features like Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Pinocchio and Fantasia. Artifacts include the first Mickey Mouse watch, books, toys and more memorabilia from the period, as well as marketing and promotional items.

Little Cities Gallery Second Floor 10 am - 5 pm Friday, 10 am - 5 pm Saturday 1 pm - 5 pm Sunday.
Free to the Public

EFA Student Show:
The Education for the Arts program will present its student art and media show. The efforts of some of Kalamazoo County's brightest and most talented art and media students will be show casing their "fresh-off-the-disk" projects. Media projects generated with Flash, Macromedia Director and Apple's Final Cut Pro editing application will present a new perspective of today's art student... and tomorrow's professional.

Stop into the Epic Center Atrium for this unique and fascinating show and speak with the young artists displaying their works. Also being shown is the EFA's new project "The Brown House" a look at a local Frank Lloyd Wright house. This program, directed by award-winning producer/director Gary Glaser, provides insights into the architect's mind of design.

10 a.m.. to 5 p.m.. all weekend. Epic Center Atrium.
Free to the public.

Films

Animusic
With the advent of computer graphics, animators have devised many ways of interfacing with their databases. Mice, graphics tablets, keyboards and even "data gloves" have been developed to help animate. Imagine animating with a synthesizer keyboard. This is the premise of "animusic" fantastic musical machines play themselves to a high-energy sound track. Match these mind-blowing visuals to a planetarium projection system and 2000-watt sound system and you will experience animation like never before.

Kalamazoo Valley Museum: 10 a.m.. to 5 p.m.. at one-hour intervals. 1, 2, 3, 4 pm Friday 9, 10,11 am 12 and 3 pm Saturday. 2:30 Sunday
$3 all tickets

Canadian Animation:
Leonard Maltin's favorite Shorts
Canada has long been a hotbed for animation. Long winter nights and a keen artistic sensibility keep Canadians at their drawing tables and computers long after others have gone to sleep. See animation historian and critique Leonard Maltin's favorite Canadian shorts in this film created by the National Film Board of Canada.

Friday and Saturday 5 pm at the State Theater.
Free to the Public

Forgotten Films
For the animation historian and lover, Steve Staunchfield, historian and instructor at the College for Creative Studies will bring to light wonderful films that have been forgotten to time.

1 pm - 2:30 Saturday KVM
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

The Growth of Veggie Tales
A phenomenon in our time, the Big Idea of Lombard Illinois has repeated what Walt Disney did in 1927: Start work in humble surroundings and create a genre of animation second to none. Listen to the creators, Phil Vischer and Mike Norwicki as they describe many of the trials and tribulations they had as they brought their characters Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber to life. A truly inspired tale of dedication and persistence.

1 pm - 2:30 Sunday KVM
Free to the Public

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Saturday Morning Cartoons
We are planning a special event Saturday morning, where we will recreate a 1930's style presentation of classic animations from the 1920's to the 1960's. The silent films, accompanied by a State Theater Keyboard Artist, will be a chance to connect generations of animation lovers. This event will be an opportunity for grandparents to share memories with their families of attending cartoon screenings when they were children. It will offer the opportunity for many children to see early black and white cartoons and see if they are as funny, relevant and interesting as today's animation.

10 am Saturday, State Theater.
Free to the Public

Special Events

Networking Picnic
After two intense days of animation education and screenings, the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International is proud to present the Networking Picnic. Make new contacts, invent new projects, eat good picnic food and generally unwind before the big show on Saturday night. Vince Miller, the voice of KAFI will be providing entertainment and music. Held three blocks away from the festival site at Bell's Brewery and Pub, enjoy the camaraderie of fellow animators in Bell's Backyard Pub. 5 - 7:30 pm Bell's Pub and Brewery

Limited to Full Festival pass holders, the networking picnic is an event your will want to attend!

Cartoon Challenge:
The festival week will begin May 12 with the start of the "Cartoon Challenge," a competitive entry competition. Working space, materials, computers and production equipment will be provided for up to 10 teams of five animators to work 24 hours a day (if they care to!) creating ten animated public service announcements. The topic will not be announced until the teams arrive and assemble at the production site.

The festival will provide simple accommodations and tasty meals. Team entries must be completed by 10 AM Saturday May 18, 2002. The 10 entries will be screened at the May 18 festival competition screening. Each person attending the screening will receive a ballot and vote on the best entry. Ballots will be counted and the winning team will be announced at the concluding awards presentation event May 19.

Helen Victoria Haynes
WORLD PEACE
Storyboard and Animation Scholarship Competition

THIS UNIQUE COMPETITION
PROMOTES WORLD PEACE
Create a Storyboard for an animated PSA (Public Service Announcement) of up to 3 minutes that you would produce on 'How to Achieve World Peace'. If you win, we'll give you $1,000 plus additional prizes upon delivery of your completed animation.

This competition has 2 parts, each with individual Deadlines and prizes, over a 2-year period.

Winners of this year's competition will be announced at the Sunday Evening Awards Ceremony. Winners from previous years will be displayed at the Epic Center Atrium.

http://www.swcp.com/animate/contest.htm

VeggieTales Sing along:
Back in the 1930s and 40s, moviegoers would enjoy short films before the main features. Newsreels were popular as were six-minute cartoon reels that had their humble beginnings in this genre. Some six-minute featurettes had familiar songs such as "Way Down upon the Suwannee River" sung by a small group and illustrated with elaborate renderings. These first "music videos" had the lyrics superimposed at the bottom of the screen with a bouncing ball keeping time. Audiences were encourage and usually did sing along with these festive little "toons".

In that spirit, join in with the State Theater audience and sing along with Larry the Cucumber and Bob the Tomato of "VeggieTales". This 45-minute program will be sure to delight young and old alike. Even if you don't know the words to "We Are the Vikings Who Don't Do Anything," these delightful little operettas will lighten your heart:

KAFI (Baker) continued on page 12

KAFI (Baker) from page 11

3:30 p.m.. Sunday State Theater.
Free to the Public

Animation Trade Fair/KVCC Art Show:
Stop by the main floor at KVCC's Arcadia Commons Campus in the heart of the festival and talk to professionals in the animation industry. Many festival speakers will be setting up tables where you can interact with them, purchase books, obtain school catalogs and enjoy a one-to-one interaction not generally found in seminars.

The KVCC Advanced Technology Center for New Media is hosting a student art show there. See the results of the outstanding art program offered at KVCC, and meet some of the artists and instructors.

10 am to 5 pm Friday and Saturday KVCC-ACC.
Free to the Public.

Panel Discussion: Violence in Animation:
Discussing the effect of violence in animation on society, John Fountain, Storyboard artist at Disney; Maxine Schlacker, producer and educator from Max the Mutt Animation School in Toronto; and Pat Norris, director of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum and others will pose questions and discuss this hotly debated topic.

3 to 5 pm Sunday at Wellspring Dance Recital Hall in the Epic Center.
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID

Call-for-Entries Anthology:
Open monitor show various locations along the festival circuit. KAFI has been graced by nearly 200 festival entries. We truly believe these entries all deserve public recognition and viewing. In this spirit, we have created this anthology. A potpourri of all the entries edited back to back, these artistic visions span the world. Take some time to view them.

Ongoing show – walk ins welcome 10 am - 5pm
Kalamazoo Public Library
Free to the Public

Top Ten Animation Schools
Looking to go to an animation school? Check out these entries from the "EDU" category in our festival competition and make your own assessment of what is happening in the world of education.

Kalamazoo Raddison, Stone Theater
Saturday 10 am to 5 pm. Sunday 10 pm to 5 pm.
Free to the Public

Egyptian Focus
Kalamazoo College will host the Egyptian Focus. Over 25 films from Egypt have been brought to the festival by animator/producer Mohamed Shahm showing the depth and excellence of the Egyptian Animation Industry. Animation from the Arab world brings a unique and fascinating perspective to the west. Take time to view these outstanding films.

Friday 8 PM, Sat 8 PM
Tickets $10 regular - $5 student rush with ID - Kalamazoo College Student Free

The Victoria Independent Film & Video Festival

January 30 - February 8, 2004
The Victoria Independent Film & Video Festival is an annual event held near the beginning of February and screens 160 films with approximately 30 animations, they also host a weekend workshop for people wanting to learn how to do animation. The web site is www.vifvf.com for more information.

Kathy Kay – Festival Director
Victoria Independent
Film & Video Festival
808 View St., Victoria,
B.C., Canada V8W 1K2
p) 250 389 0444
f) 250 389 0406
www.vifvf.com

ASIFA/Central Mission Statement

ASIFA: Association Internationale du Film d' Animation

The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. – adopted 3/1992

Member News

What's this with all the holding of nuptials lately?
Here comes another one!
Congratulations Karl!

ASIFA/Central member Karl Koehle, is a Computer Animator with Litigation Insights-LGC and is set to get married this May.

If you would like to share your member news with us, send it to jenniferp@technical-animation to be included in the Summer edition.

The **Kalamazoo Animation Festival International** is back!

Three days of World Class entertainment and excitment!

Tickets: $10 per show or seminar /$50 day pass / $100 full festival pass/
Student Tickets: $5 per show or seminar (rush) / $20 day pass / $50 full festival pass
Single show tickets available the day of the show at the State theater and KVCC Arcadia Commons Campus
Full Festival and Day passes can be purchased online at http://kafi.kvcc.edu

Full festival schedule and details are available on our website at http://kafi.kvcc.edu

SUMMER 2003

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

SUMMER 2003

Adventures in Flash Animation: Creating a Music Video in 30 Days or Less

by Brad Yarhouse

(Note: This article was written from a Mac Users perspective, much of it is applicable for other systems/ software.

To review a QuickTime 6 version of the final animation go to: http://www.yarhouse.com/toriamos.html The file is a 9 MB download.)

It all started innocently enough, just trying to check out the latest QuickTime trailers for movies on apple's web site. As I was about to click on "Finding Nemo", I noticed a small banner for a musician, Tori Amos. "Tori's Taxivision. Create Tori Amos' next video" read the banner. Curiously, I read the rules and concept. "Break out that old sketchbook and get to work on your storyboards....use any moving medium. Tori will personally select the finalists."

I was not a Tori Amos fan per say, I was familiar with her hits and knew a bit about her from friends who enjoyed her music but, I had never given it much of my focus. I was going to dismiss the contest when, I started thinking that I had been looking for a vehicle for promoting my animation and also a good challenge. I had about 30 days to complete the video from storyboard to DVD delivery.

To Flash or not to Flash?

Because of my years of experience in working in Macromedia Flash, it wasn't hard to decide what I would use for a medium. As an artist I struggle with the typical "Flash Cartoon look". I love the tool, but am never happy with the typical use of lines and fills that propagate the flash work seen on the internet. Online it is a challenge to balance between loose flowing animation and file size. Usually I have to compromise. For the contest, the delivery method was going to be DVD so, I was not limited to trying to optimize it for online delivery. I tossed out my preconceived notions of file size, vector complexity, and other ways of optimizing the files for internet travel. Using my Wacom tablet, I drew directly in Flash, as I typically do, but instead of trying for an economy of line I pushed line use as far as I could within the constraints of my deadline. I used a mix of crosshatch and inked line looks that at times looked like scratch board and other times old black and white Fleisher cartoons. So many lines that playback within Flash itself was virtually impossible.

Mac the Knife Gives Flash a Tummy Tuck

The next thing I decided to throw out of the typical Flash arsenal was editing and timing animation and sound directly in Flash. I decided to build the project as an animatic in Final Cut Pro, taking my scanned story boards and syncing them to sound within Final Cut Pro. Then, building the animation elements in Flash and importing them into Final Cut for trimming and timing to the music. The animatic became my guide for building the flash pieces. This helped speed things tremendously. Flash does not edit

Flash Animation (Yarhouse) continued on 4

Inside this Issue

2004 Conference & Retreat Info
President's Report
and more ...

Greetings from the President

by Jim Middleton

Aaargh, it's comment time!

It has been a phenomenal time for animation in the Midwest. The past two years have brought us regional festivals and retreats, most recently in Kalamazoo in May. Kalamazoo Valley Community College let ASIFA member David Baker loose once more to bring hundreds of animation enthusiasts together for a vast array of conferences and educational interactions, as well as serving as central feeding ground for the animation challenge, with the timely topic of human rights.

One nice thing about animators is that we can communicate with each other without resorting to MOABs or threatening postures (our poses are designed to create proper silhouettes, and our language is articulate, and universal).

Nonetheless, even animation can fall prey to the dreaded PC environment (and that doesn't mean Windows). Recently, the release of Finding Nemo came coupled with the 1989 Pixar short, Knickknack. While such pairings are a delight for both their entertainment and educational value, demonstrating how far digital animation technology has come in just the past decade, there was something quite disconcerting about this reissue of Knickknack-- Pixar redid the original film, giving the two motivating female characters complete mastectomies. Perhaps the mamarian references were considered inappropriate for the intended market of Nemo, but what can one say now of the libidinous motivation of a captive snowman when directed to two females who now appear quite pre-pubescent? Perhaps it is well that the agreement between Disney and Pixar ends in 2005, so such considerations will not be a motivating force in rewriting animation history.

And so it goes,
Yr. hmbl tpst,

Jim Middleton

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Dave Daruszka

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E-mail: asifa@asifa.org

ASIFA/Central Conference:
To be announced

To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

ASIFA Financial Report 2003

Presented by Deanna Morse, Treasurer, ASIFA/Central, 4/14/03

We are in the black, with some savings in the bank. We're not making money, but we're not losing money either.

Our primary source of income is from memberships. The retreat last spring also made a profit. The only expenses since last years retreat were for website hosting, newsletter printing and mailing. After the conference, we will pay our international dues, which are $20/international member plus bank transfer fees.

(balance on 4/30/2002 was $3139.35)
4/30/02-4/30/03

Total deposits: $2750.
Total expenses: $3307.93
Interest earned: $24.03

Balance as of 4/30/2003 $2605.45

ASIFA Central Member Edward Baist at the Center for Creative Studies (CCS) in Detroit, Michigan invites applications for computer animation artists/faculty in several areas:

1. Full time faculty giving a creative imaginative and storytelling direction to the program utilizing Maya
2. Faculty to start a brand new game design or intelligent game program
3. Creative traditional animation artist/faculty experienced and skilled in traditional animation skills but with a European influence.

There are also opportunities for part time faculty in all areas of traditional animation 2D and 3D computer animation, stop motion, experimental animation, concept development and storyboarding, acting for animation, interactive animation and graphics as well as digital cinema and possibly history of animation and digital media.

For more information, www.ccscad.edu or call Linda Raveau at 1-800-952-ARTS or 1-313-664 7698.

2003 WORLD PEACE Scholarship Winner Announced!

The winner of the 2003 International Helen Victoria Haynes World Peace Storyboard and Animation Scholarship Competition was announced at the KAFI 2003 awards ceremony on Sunday, May 18th in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Mary Lou Haynes, Executive Director of the Scholarship Competition, awarded the first place prize to Aaron Bowers, an animation student at Columbia College in Chicago.

Second Place was awarded to Benjamin Byrne, University of Technology Sydney, Australia.

Bowers will receive an initial cash prize of $500.00 USD that he will use towards creating an animation of his storyboard entry based on his idea of 'How to achieve WORLD PEACE'. He will also provide quarterly updates on his progress in the Frame by Frame newsletter. Upon successful completion next year of the animation, he will receive an additional cash prize of $1,000.00 USD.

This year's international competition saw the largest number of entries in its 8-year history, with entrants from the United States, Australia and Singapore. Congratulations to the winners, and we hope to see even more student entries in 2004!

If you are a college student interested in this unique competition, visit the website at:
www.hvh-worldpeace.org
Or send an email to haynesworldpeace@aol.com.

Mary Lou Haynes Congratulates HVH World Peace Winner Aaron Bowers

Flash Animation (Yarhouse) continued from 1

very well. Because it uses a timeline with layers, the process of editing means often having to adjust every single layer for each frame that is edited.

Exit Stage QuickTime Video

After completing the animation for a storyboarded segment, I would export using quickTime video with settings set to "no compression" 24 bit color with full quality on the slider (fig. 1 [fig 1-8 can be viewed on page 7]). Not to confuse this with the other option for export called "QuickTime" which exports a Flash file capable of playing within a QuickTime player but does not convert the file into a actual bitmap movie format.

Something to remember when working with Flash that will be used in a movie format such as quickTime or AVI is that the creation of the animation needs to break a few more rules of flash development. In the typical flash online animation, it is crucial to develop the animation using Movie Clips vs. Graphics (fig. 2). Flash resources are reused from a central library giving a user the ability to reuse elements and animation without an increase in the file size, allowing Flash to have smaller file sizes and easier downloads. In order to use some of the automatic tweening capabilities of Flash, pieces of animation or type or drawings need to be stored in the library; then called to the stage for use in the timeline that makes up the Flash files presentation. There are three options for storing the animation elements; "Movie Clip", "Button", or "Graphic" . "Graphic" and "Button" were the original options with "Movie Clip" being added in Flash 4. Essentially, "Movie Clips" can be thought of as mini movies inside Flash that have there own timelines and run independently of the main timeline. It's like having a theater with a clock sitting on its stage. The clock will continue to click and run independently of what action happens on the stage. Lights may come on and off, actors enter or leave, etc. and the clock continues to run. Graphics are dependent on the stage for getting their timing. If the timeline stops on Flash's main stage, then the graphic animations stop running. When exporting to QuickTime, movie clips and their internal timelines are ignored and do not play. Graphics correctly export. If you have dreams of creating your own DVD of your Flash work, it takes a bit of conversion time to change the Movie clips to Graphics so that they export correctly for display in QuickTime and eventually iDVD. Side note: iDVD does not support Flash as a format at this time so converting the files is the only way to land them on DVD.

Loopy Animation Frames

Because I wanted to give the illusion of constant movement to the animation yet, did not have the time to draw the entire piece as key frames, I had to use a cheat. I created graphic files consisting of a minimum of 3 frames that would loop over and over. Sometimes, elements on the screen where made of 3 frames while, other elements on the screen had 5 or 7 frames of looping animation (fig. 3). This was to try to get the animations repetition not to "modulate" at the same time for everything on the screen. What really gets me excited as an artist, is exposing the fact that what we are creating is animation, not panning story books. Because I was flying by the seat of my pants in terms of my deadline, I did not have time for clean up and polish, so I exaggerated the looseness of the animation. Besides, I happen to love the expression and feeling of loose animation vs. polished, tight pieces. Hint: When looping with a frame rate of 12 frames per second, it sustains the illusion better if the loops are odd numbers.

Tweedle Flash With Tweedle Tweening

Flash has the capability to automatically tween it's "Graphic" or "Movie Clip" symbols. Computer tweening is fairly simple with Flash. Objects have a start and end point on the timeline. As long as only one object is used at the start of the tween and the same object is at the end of the tween with nothing else on the layer in the timeline, Flash can handle moving an object. Tweening is limited to rotating it, sizing it, shifting color, making it transparent, or changing the position. It can "ease in" or "ease out" of these tweened moves. It can do this while the animation within a "graphic" or "movie clip" is occurring. So, it is possible to do a 3 frame loop and then move that loop across the screen. In the example of

Flash Animation (Yarhouse) continued on 8

ASIFA Central General High - Fallutin' Meeting

by Jim Middleton

First of all, if you're going to hold an ASIFA meeting, hold it in a restaurant. Then, if things get too heated, you can at least resort to a convenient food fight.

Secondly, if you can coordinate your meeting with an animation festival, do so. At least you can write everything off as an expense that way. Not that should be the sole reason for having the meeting in the first place, mind you, but it is always a good idea, whenever possible, to multitask your deductions. Not that I am qualified to offer financial advice (gee, check out my 2000 stock portfolio for ample proof of that)-- for that sort of direction, I refer the aspiring consultant on taxing matters to our treasurer and keeper of the cheese, Deanna Morse.

Now I have managed to get completely off track here. Starbucks can do that to one's usually docile neural synapses. The point of this exercise in typing is to document the events of our recent Grand Meeting of Animators for ASIFA Central this past May, the 16th, a Friday, at about 5:30 PM, during the KAFI festival, at Kalamazoo's Blue Dolphin restaurant on Burdick Avenue.

In attendance were over a dozen of unnamed ASIFA Central members and their invited guests, a few confused ne'er do wells, and a waiter named Bjorg. Bjorg waited on another table, but his name was certainly worth noting, as this was a Greek restaurant. Mike Allore behaved himself admirably, in case his bride is reading this. Jim Middleton learned that bumping a tracfone by Nokia can set it to calling the operator until the phone battery dies (usually about 115 minutes, in case anyone's taking notes...the operator didn't leave a message). Topics ranged from money to feta cheese, freshness of educational opportunities to the freshness of the olives.

And there were some actual business discussions as well...

1. ASIFA International restructuring, whereby ASIFA's home offices will implement a parliamentary style board of governance. International members discussed Thomas Renholder's proposal and tossed around their assorted proxies, to be forwarded by Deanna Morse.

2. Lifetime memberships to ASIFA Central were extended to lifetime members Dave Daruzska and Mary Lou Haynes. They still had to get their own moussaka, however.

3. Elections for open or opening sites on the board of directors were scheduled for this coming fall, with biographies being published in an upcoming Frame By Frame, beautifully edited by the talented and under-appreciated Jennifer Peterson.

4. Board membership was given the criteria of one-year membership before eligibility.

5. Discussions on the ASIFA Central membership list, maintenance, and renewal followed. Look for a combination membership card- renewal acknowledgement!

6. There was no 6. Well, ok, we could say that Deanna Morse, our Treasurer, assures us that we are solvent and can weather any enquiries regarding our non-profit status. These papers are being kept in a safe, temperature controlled salt mine under the guidance of the Disney Corporation and Bill Gates.

7. For next year's ASIFA Central conference and retreat - we need members to suggest speakers; current possible dates for the 2004 adventure are April 16-18, April 23-25, or May 21-23. The venue will be the Doubletree Suites again (as in 2002) or something equally entertaining! Contact Dave or Mary Lou (AlcheMedia Productions) to volunteer, volunteer, and then, volunteer! (Did I mention we need volunteers?)

8. We discussed a few other things as well, but by then the Ouzo had taken hold, and things on this notebook just aren't pretty...

9. The meeting was adjourned by 8 PM to attend some more phenomenal KAFI entries at the State theatre.

There you have it - the official transcript with poorly erased notations by the transcriptionist, in memory of Richard Nixon, who by the way, is still dead.

Flash Animation (Yarhouse) continued from 4

figure 4, the cityscape in the background is drawn key frames, the lamp posts in the foreground are actually the same lamp post series of 3 drawings looping endlessly while I drag the lamp post across the page. Giving the illusion that the posts are hand drawn and traveling endlessly. I am also able to duplicate the loop of the lamp post animation and change the colors to indicate that it is turned off and replace the loop of the "lamp on" with the "lamp off".

Hard Day's to Night

One of the more effective pieces of the animation is the taxi driving with the street lights flashing past on either side. At one point it's shown in day time with a close-up of the back-end of the taxi (the beginning) and later after the chorus it's shown at night without a crop. Both sections of animation use the same Flash elements with slight modifications (fig. 5 and fig. 6). In the night scene, the grey graduation background has been added. The buildings are black, the color I originally drew them in. The rest of the taxi is shown and light reflections have been added to the pavement. In the Day scene (fig. 6) the buildings have been toned down so that they recede and appear more distant. The crop is closer but it is the same animation drawings. The buildings have been grayed by taking advantage of Flash's ability to adjust a "graphic" or "movie clip" tone see figure 7. Because I was able to leverage animation that had been created for one scene and combine it with new elements I was able to shave precious time off development without compromising the concept.

Big and Small

As a Flash animator I take for granted the capabilities of Flash for infinite scaling. The program uses vector base images similar to Adobe Illustrator or Macromedia Freehand, as opposed to bitmap based imagery used by all photo based products from video editing suites to Adobe Photoshop and your basic digital camera. Bitmap images cannot be scaled up without the pixels that make up the image causing the image to raster (get pixelated). Side note: there is software based on the use of fractal mathematics that allows some possibilities in scaling bitmap images. Vector images are based on math. The image is calculated by the computer recreating the shape with lines and fills. In Flash for the ending of the video I have a close up of the top of the taxi cab at night with the road weaving and twisting underneath (fig. 8). I drew the taxi cab close-up then scaled it and the road back till it was 27% of it initial size. The road is a loop of animation that repeats over and over but because the viewer sees it mostly close-up then, later as it is scaled it is harder to notice the loop.

Mystery Solved?

This is just an overview of the many ways Flash can be used for quickly creating broadcast animation. Probably the best reason that it is being used for television, film and the Internet is that it is easy to use and economical to purchase. If you were wondering what the outcome was of the Tori Amos competition, as of this writing the winners have not been announced. The deadline for the runners-up to be posted is now over 3 weeks late. By the time I finished the music video I didn't really care whether it won or not. It had taken on personal motivation. No longer was it a song for Tori Amos, it was a animation for myself.

Brad Yarhouse

A Web Designer and Animator, his animation has been featured by Wired Magazine's Hotwired.com and in the Castelli Festival in Italy, The Aspen Short Film Festival, and the Streaming Cinema Festival which traveled from Philadelphia's festival of World Cinema to festivals in Seoul, Korea and other places. His Flash work has also been awarded "Shocked Site of the day several times by Macromedia Software. His design work has been reviewed on Communication Arts Web site and in a number of books including Lynda Wienman's "Designing Web Graphics". His animation was featured in the book "Flash 5 Cartooning" by Mark Clarkson. Recently, several of his animated shorts can be seen on MP4.com and on television in Finland. (Why Finland? - why not!) When he grows up he wants to fund his animated personal shorts by doing animation for television commercials.

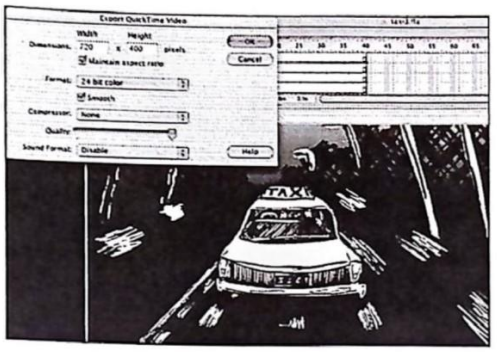

Fig. 1

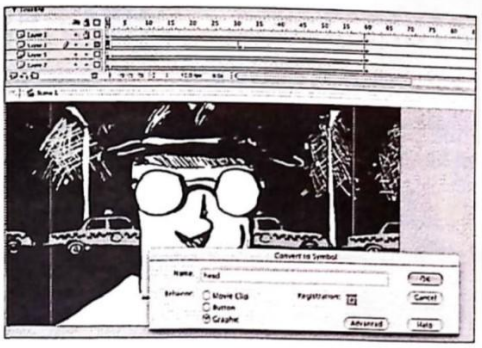

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

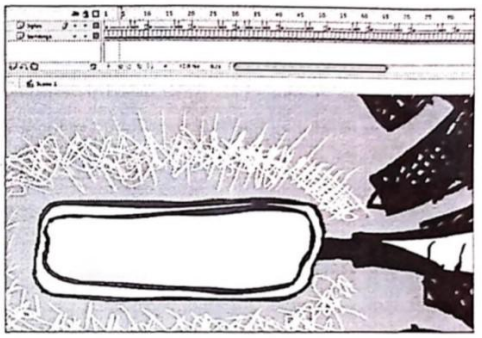

Fig. 4

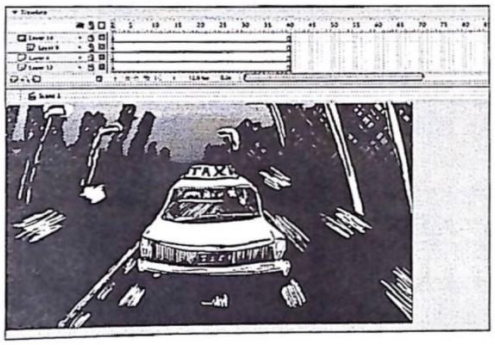

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

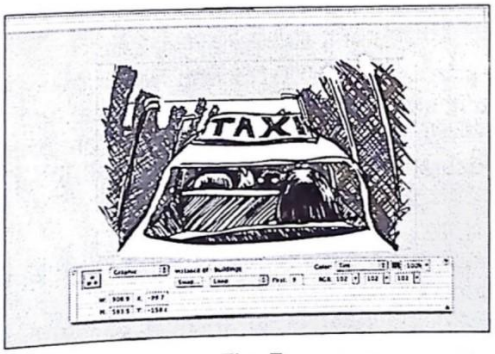

Fig. 7

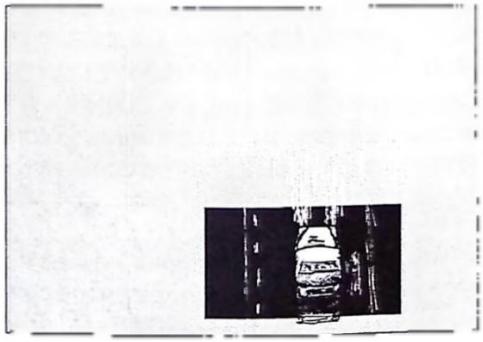

Fig. 8

Stop-Motion Animation Workshop with Tom Brierton

Date: **October 17-19**
Location: **Allendale, Michigan (exact address TBA)**

Chicago-based stop-motion filmmaker/educator Tom Brierton will be holding a two-and-a-half day intensive workshop on stop-motion animation October 17-19th in Allendale, Michigan.

Credentials:
Brierton has been practicing stop-motion animation for 31 years, and has directed/animated the stop-motion short, NO EXIT?, which has been shown nationally at various film festivals, as well as the Music Box Theatre in Chicago, IL. Brierton is the author of "Stop-Motion Armature Machining" (McFarland and Co., Pub, 2002), as well as "Stop-Motion Puppet Fabrication-Build-up, Foam Injection, and Finishing Techniques" (also through McFarland, due out Dec., 2009). Currently producing/directing THE LABYRINTH, (a stop-motion animated film based on the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur). Brierton has also taught stop-motion and CGI character animation at Columbia College Chicago for the past six years.

Topics to be covered at the workshop will be:

Friday, August 15th, 6 PM to 9 PM

1. Introductions
2. Screened examples of stop-motion animation
3. Puppet Design
4. Wire armature fundamentals/creation
5. Enrollees will create a wire armature of a human character.

Saturday, August 16th, 9 AM to 12 noon
Demonstration on using metal milling and metal lathe machines for the creation of a professionally machined puppet armature, with a show-and-tell of the six main types of armature joints (machines used will be the miniature Sherline mill and lathe, as well as a drill press and drop saw):

1. The dowel joint
2. The hinge joint
3. The sandwich plate bearing joint
4. The swivel joint
5. The universal joint
6. The collet joint

(NOTE: Due to safety/insurance reasons, no enrollee will be allowed to run any of the machines.)

Break for lunch (provided at the workshop facility) 12 noon to 1 PM

1 PM to 3 PM
Demonstration of the foam injection process:

1. Sculpting a puppet in clay over an armature
2. Creating the mold halves using Ultracal-30 mold-making material
3. The mixing of hot foam
4. Use of the foam injection gun
5. Baking the mold
6. Removing the foam casting from the mold
7. Removing flashing, painting technique and detailing

Break 3 PM to 3:15 PM

3:15 PM to 6 PM
Demonstration of the foam build-up technique (materials will be provided):

1. Enrollees will use scissors to sculpt blocks of foam muscles, to be affixed on their pre-existing wire armature
2. Gluing the foam pieces onto the armature
3. Creating foam skins to cover the foam muscles
4. Painting and detailing

Sunday, August 17, 9 AM to 10 noon
Demonstration of the following:

1. the use of tie-downs
2. using the surface gauge for incremental movement of the armature/puppet
3. straight-ahead animation
4. A cursory discussion/demonstration on performance animation using a walk cycle.

10 AM to 12 noon
Enrollees will take turns animating their build-up wire armatured puppets:

1. A demonstration will be given on using a video lunchbox sync and shooting digitally with a Sony HDV 900 digital camera.
2. Enrollees will practice animating during this portion of the workshop, creating their own performance animation. Or, the enrollee can animate their wire framed build-up puppet, or a professionally machined human armature or a four-legged animal armature. Machined armatures will be provided.

Brierton Workshop continued on 11

The Evolution of Animation Education

by Deanna Morse

Keynote Address: Kalamazoo Animation Festival International: KAFI Educator's Conference 5/16/03

I was asked to speak about the Evolution of Animation Education to help provide a framework for our discussions today. This "evolution" is still in process and the changes are shaped by three areas:

- Tremendous Growth
- Profound technological developments
- Intersection with a volatile industry

Each of these relates to the fundamental question: what do animation students really need to know?

I will speak briefly about each of these areas.

The first area is tremendous growth.

Like most animators in my generation, I was self-taught. I came to animation like an explorer, with the spirit of self-discovery and invention. In undergraduate school, I studied Film, Photography and Art. I was assigned to do a "close reading" of a TV Commercial in a film class. I reached into the box and pulled out a 16mm film reel, and when I threaded it up it - the star was the Pillsbury Doughboy. As I analyzed it, I realized I had no idea how they got that little flour ball to move! I asked several friends, and they were also clueless. Then I learned about the unphotographed animator – whose hands reached in to move-click-move the little puppet. Feeling like a garage inventor, I figured out how to do it too! Using my newly discovered knowledge, I made my first animated film in 1970.

I began teaching animation 30 years ago. At that time, there were two books on teaching and learning animation - How to Animate in 12 Hard Lessons, and Teaching Film Animation to Children. These books represented two directions in animation that still exist today - how to get trained to work in industry, how to use animation for self expression.

There was a spirit of innovation among animation teachers. In the 70's, this was fueled by the Artists in the Schools Programs funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Because animation was cheaper to teach than live-action film, many states hired animators like myself to go into schools teaching kids to make media. We were enthusiastic teachers - we felt we were democratizing media by offering the communication tools of industry to the general public.

Information was power. The key was to find the other animation teachers.

Contrast that with today - the problem now is digging through the wealth of information to **find what is useful**.

This week on Google, "Animation and Education" had 967,000 (nine hundred sixty seven thousand) hits. "Animation" alone got 6,660,000 (six million six hundred sixty thousand) hits. So the first major change or evolution is GROWTH and Visibility. As academics, we don't see ourselves as lonely pioneers, explorers, or garage inventors, but as part of a larger community. However, the community is now SO large that as we try to define ourselves we may feel more isolated than we did when there were only several dozen teacher-animators.

The second area is profound technological developments

The tools have changed. When I first started teaching, our written instructions for students fit on a page: how to set up a tripod with your Super 8 or Bolex camera, a couple of clamp-on lamps at 45 degree angles, use a higher wattage bulb for proper color temperature, tape everything down, including the camera, artwork and tripod. It seemed like the most important supply item was masking tape, and you used plenty of it.

Jump forward a decade to the early 80's, where the tools became much more complex. The heated debates at SIGGRAPH among educators were whether artists needed to learn programming. Could you be an effective artist if you didn't know how to fully control the tools?

Jump forward another couple of decades to today, where the programming question is no longer in the forefront. With so many robust professional software tools available, the question is: which tool to use? And how many tools - how many software packages does a student need to master?

We have come a long way from that single page of instructions and a hefty roll of masking tape.

And what is considered animation today, anyway?

My interest has always been in the exploration of various techniques to convey ideas. What can you only do using animation? And how does your choice of the material and technique affect what can be created?

When I started teaching animation twenty plus years ago, I taught a tools and techniques approach. Some animation history, and exercises in cut-out, drawn animation and optical printing. This was a full years' course.

Today, a similar "overview" tools and techniques approach would balloon to several semesters - or years - of classes including:

- Experimental/art animation
- Classical 2-D (paper and cel, theories of movement and techniques)
- 3-D computer based modeling and animation
- Tabletop model animation (like clay, puppet)

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Animation Evolution continued from 12

- Special effects
- Animation for the web
- Multimedia (for CD ROM and DVD production)

And of course in this curriculum you would need an historical grounding, studies in film theory, aesthetics. (Finally there are books that support teaching animation history, theory and aesthetics, and more international animation books are published every year.) And to stretch the students' perspectives: you would want to include screening of works that are not readily accessible to students today.

My educational approach is determined by my framework. I teach in a film and video program. But animation is not always in film and video.

The AWN school database of schools teaching animation currently lists 570 schools in 42 countries. Last year, I did a rough count of where animation was housed in public universities in the US - what department - it was about 1/3 in Art, 1/3 in Film/Video and 1/3 in Computer Science. One would imagine that these courses might be taught somewhat differently. And the array of courses would vary depending on how "deep" the program is regardless of where it is located.

And what is the goal of the school: technical training, arts training, skills development, career training, or a broad based education?

The technological developments and growth of the past twenty years are reflected in the variety of animation schools and programs available for students today.

The third issue that has shaped animation education is the intersection with a volatile industry

In 1990, *USA Today* cited computer animation as the top career field for college graduates. And we had a decade where there were some amazing opportunities, with undergraduate superstars being offered six figure salaries. This created some stress for college teachers. How could we train students for what appeared to be a growing and lucrative field?

But the animation industry is cyclical, like a rollercoaster, and there have been peaks and valleys since the beginning.

After the invention of animation, there was a strong studio presence in the twenties, and then the prolific golden age of the late 30's and early 40's, but in the fifties and 60's - there was nothing. 1963 was cited as the worst year for animators with even Disney animators routinely filing for unemployment.

In the 70's, Roger Rabbit is often cited as the turning point, proving that animated features could make money. This success resulted in more animated TV shows and ads. Later there was growth in areas of new technologies, part of this is in response to the popularity of animation, and partly from emerging and diverse markets.

Where will our animation students land in the work force? In terms of the industry today, one current challenge is how we will keep significant parts of the industry alive in the US. With the low cost of skilled animation labor overseas and in Canada, where will the entry level jobs be for American students?

Growth, technology, perceived pressures from a roller coaster industry - these are some of the pressures we face. But what are the key issues for us as educators?

To answer that, I pose some questions that relate to education in general...

What do students need in order to get their first job? How can we teach transferable skills for when that job changes? What is it that students really need to know for lifelong learning and success?

How can we design authentic tasks - with challenging and meaningful inquiry? How can we design tasks appropriate to the technology, and to the knowledge level of the student? We want our students to tackle meaningful problems with rigorous involvement, and enjoy some success.

How can we teach team-building and communication skills? How can we nurture the soloists, but also honor taking ownership and pride in being part of the symphony?

How can we encourage learners to build and support the animation community? To feel that they are part of our global community?

How do we direct students to take social responsibility for the messages they create as public communicators?

For the long term, what we really want to model - and teach - are some basic skills that have nothing really to do with our discipline. To teach students how to learn, how to adapt, how to ask good questions, how to analyze and be critical, how to be introspective, how to think outside the box. To have a knowledge of the past and present with an enthusiastic curiosity and a willingness to embrace change. To be respectful of others and our planet. To work for what is good - to work to leave the world a better place.

Because there is only one certain thing in the "evolution of animation education." We have not reached a plateau. The change continues.

As educators, one of our primary goals is to try to shape that change.

Deanna Morse

CINEQUEST FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES SCREENPLAY COMPETITION

Submissions Now Being Accepted; Winners to be Announced Opening Night of Cinequest 14

Screenplay submissions are now being accepted with a deadline to submit of September 1, 2003. ALL screenplays submitted will receive reader feedback so writers can take suggestions and improve their scripts. On December 1, 2003, 10 finalists will be announced and given 14 days to re-submit their screenplay with any corrections and improvements they choose. Those 10 scripts will go onto the final round of competition where the top three winners will be announced and given cash prizes on opening night of Cinequest 14, Wednesday, March 3, 2004.

Prizes
- 1st Place $2,000 U.S.
- 2nd Place $1,000 U.S.
- 3rd Place $500 U.S.
- Top 10 finalists will:

o Be given exposure to literary agencies, film studios and Hollywood producers.
o Receive a Cinequest 14 Platinum Festival Pass, which allows full access to all Cinequest events, screenings and parties.
o Be contacted December 1, 2003, and be given until December 15, 2003, to submit a rewritten script.
o Have names and contact information posted on Cinequest Web site.

- First, Second and Third Place winners will receive the above mentioned, PLUS will be:

o Included in a Cinequest press release.
o Posted on the Cinequest Web site along with brief script synopsis and contact information.
o Given further opportunities by having their scripts read by several influential producers, agents and / or managers who play an active role in today's industry.

All genres and lengths (up to 140 pages) of screenplays are accepted from low-budget Indie dramas to mega-money action flicks. The entry fee is U.S. $50. Register through www.withoutabox.com or download a printable entry form (Adobe® Acrobat® PDF). Complete it and mail or fax it to Cinequest.

Cinequest
P.O. Box 720040
San Jose, CA 95172 0040
Tel: (408) 995-5033 / Fax: (408) 995-5713
Email: screenplay@cinequest.org
www.cinequest.org
http://www.cinequest.org/
Contact the Cinequest office for overnight / courier address.

Inspiring the Maverick in All of Us

Cinequest is Northern California's premier motion picture institute that presents a soul-stirring and personable festival of international films and digital media forums for movie lovers, Maverick film artists, and film students.

Named one of the Top 10 Film Festivals in the world by the Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide, Cinequest joined Cannes, Toronto, Telluride, and Sundance with this honor.

Cinequest 14 will occur March 3 - 14 www.cinequest.org

Midwest Independent Film & Video Competition-Call For Entries

The Milwaukee International Film Festival, November 6-16, is releasing a Call For Entries for submission to its Midwest Independent Film & Video Competition. Final deadline is August 4, entry forms are available on their website at www.milwaukeefilmfest.org

Students, amateurs, and professionals are all encouraged to apply. Short and feature subjects are accepted in all genres including narrative, documentary, experimental, and animation.

The Midwest Independent Film & Video Competition is designed to contribute to the production and presentation of the high quality cinematic work from filmmakers living in the Midwestern region. The spirit of the friendly competition will foster the high standard of filmmaking for productions in the Midwest, as well as reward significantly those filmmakers who are working at the highest levels in the region. Through the presentation of the work to the public, press, and industry we will build recognition and respect for the Midwest as the vital filmmaking community it really is.

Visit our website at www.milwaukeefilmfest.org, call 414-736-4324, or email program@milwaukeefilmfest.org for more information.

Nominees for the 2004 ASIFA Central Board

Board Member Nominees Statement of Intent

Jim Middleton
Nominee for President

I have been serving as ASIFA Central President for the past couple of years and would like to remain in that post for a few more, or at least until I run out of these business cards I've printed up.

My promise is this: I will not declare war on any oil-bearing country and will do my best to improve relations with Canada. Barring that, I would like to negotiate peace between Detroit and Toledo, and stop the civil war currently raging in several boroughs of northern Illinois. I also promise to continue emptying my cluttered basement every time ASIFA Central has a retreat.

One of the most important roles that ASIFA can fill for its members is to provide a fraternal (or sororital) network. Our recent retreat, tied in with the amazing KAFI festival, provided ample opportunities for educators and enthusiasts to rob-nob, cavort, and shamelessly self-promote. These are the activities that ASIFA Central can do incredibly well, and with the interconnectivity offered by the internet, our members can keep current with the latest rollercoaster journeys in the animation industry.

A short bio of Jim Middleton

Jim Middleton is a reluctant pharmacist and an enthusiastic supporter of animation lodged in the wilds of Battle Creek, Michigan, once the home of cereal, now simply surreal. Kellogg Community College has coerced him to develop a two-year course of animation studies beginning the fall of 2003. He also is learning to enjoy Flash, continually laments the lack of support for Autodesk Animator, and has been seen in the company of ancient Mayan civilizations, or at least their study guides. He occasionally types about himself in the third person, something that disturbs his dog Sport very, very much.

Email: jimmiddleton@juno.com
Website (tawdry, yet evolving): www.animatingapothecary.com
Phone: 269-963-4945
Address: 201 Arcadia Blvd, Battle Creek, Michigan 49017
Personal statement:
Technology emphasizes speed, With thoughtful hands considered slow...
For those who mandate haste, take heed: these missives sail by escargot!

Deanna Morse
Nominee for Treasurer

I am willing to continue as Treasurer of ASIFA Central, and would like to stay active on the ASIFA/Central Board. I have been treasurer for the past five years or so. I have served on the board in some capacity since 1989: as President, treasurer, or membership chair.

My goal as treasurer is to continue to keep a balanced budget for ASIFA/Central, and to keep good records of our expenses and accounts.

As a board member, I will contribute regular articles for the newsletter (and/or the website, or e-zine, if we decide to change our information delivery format). My goal for ASIFA/Central is that we continue to provide a vehicle for communication in our community of Midwest USA animators, and that we see ourselves as part of the larger worldwide community of animators who join together through ASIFA International. As the oldest worldwide organization of animators, we serve an important purpose: reaching across political borders to connect with others and support the art of independent animation.

Jennifer Peterson
Nominee for Web Designer / Editor

I would like to serve as Web Designer and Editor on the 2004 ASIFA Central Board. I have served as vice president and newsletter editor since 1997. I have been an ASIFA Central member since 1995. I would like to continue my presence on the board but switch from maintaining the newsletter to maintaining the web site. Having served as Frame by Frame Newsletter Editor, I know what it takes to consistently distribute ASIFA Central content. Being a professional web designer, I know what it takes to design and create usable web sites. Now I

Board Nominees continued on 16

Board Nominees continued from 15

would like to bring my skillset to the ASIFA Central web. With the addition of a new design, new sections, regularly updated content and possible e-zine I would like to take member communication to the next level.

Mary Lou Haynes
Nominee for Board Position
Mary Lou Haynes has served in numerous capacities in ASIFA/ Central since the mid-1970's, including many years as a member of the Board of Directors. She has served as Newsletter Editor, Coordinator for various screenings and programs, and has coordinated 3 annual Midwest Animators Conferences & Retreats with her husband and longtime ASIFA / Central member, David Daruszka.

She served as Jury Coordinator and animation Jurist for several years for the Chicago International Film Festival (Cinema Chicago), and has hosted animators and artists visiting Chicago from around the world.

In 1996, Mary Lou established the International Helen Victoria Haynes WORLD PEACE Storyboard & Animation Competition in memory of her mother. She continues to fund and coordinate this event, which holds it's Awards Ceremony in conjunction with the annual ASIFA/ Central Conference & Midwest Animator's Retreat.

Mary Lou is a musician, a published poet and computer systems analyst by day - and believes animation is the most perfect medium of communication.

David Daruszka
Nominee for Board Position
My interest in becoming a member of the ASIFA Central board would be to provide my years of experience in management and not-for-profits to the organization. I have previously served on the board, and as President. My major contribution would be to continue assisting with the coordination of the annual Midwest Animators Conference sponsored by the chapter.

Melissa Bowman
Nominee for Web Correspondent
I would like to run as web correspondent - writing introductory copy for sections of our soon to be revamped website. In that capacity, I would work closely with Jennifer Peterson, our new proposed web person. I would also like to work with the web and membership coordinators to encourage member bios and images for the website, offering a complimentary bottle of Faygo from my reserves as incentive.

David Baker
Nominee for Membership Chair
As Membership chair, I would like to help build the ranks of ASIFA Central. ASIFA / Central is in a unique position to be able to be a crossroads of many of animation disciplines and artistic cultures. I feel that diversity in any group is good, however strength comes from pulling these resources together with a cohesive vision. ASIFA has the history, network and outlook to serve both the artist and the entrepreneur. Let us work together to bring a voice to the art form by way of ASIFA.

A short bio of David Baker
David Baker is an award winning media producer and animator. His extensive background in media production and animation has led him to produce projects ranging from instructional videos to children's CD-ROM games. Working in a variety of styles designed to both entertain and help people learn, his enthusiasm for art and animation create unique and unforgettable productions.

He is currently faculty at Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is directing the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International for KVCC. David Baker's skills range from traditional animation production to high-end 3D graphic applications. He is currently the Director of the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International along with being a full time instructor at KVCC's Center for New Media.

Cast your votes ... Ballots available in the Fall Edition of Frame by Frame.

Cartoon Challenge at KAFI 2003 Addresses Human Rights

by David Baker

Certain public service announcements stay with us. Remember "This is your brain on drugs", or the one that showed a Native American chief with a single tear running down his cheek? It may well be that the next PSA that captures our attention was developed at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

The Cartoon Challenge, a unique aspect of the Kalamazoo Animation Festival International (KAFI), took off at 9:00 am May 12 Monday morning. Between that time and 5:00 PM Friday, May 16th, ten teams of college students raced the clock to develop an animated PSA. A panel of judges determined the winner of a $4,000 scholarship for their school. The "People's Choice Award" was determined by the audience at the State Theatre at the 8:00 show, Saturday the 17th.

David Baker, director of KAFI, faced an anxious roomful of students Monday morning. They were awaiting his announcement of this year's PSA topic. Baker, who grew up during the Cold War, told a story of meeting Soviet MIG engineers at the 1990 High On Kalamazoo Air Show. Meeting and talking with those designers transformed his view of the Soviet Union, altered it from the monolithic monster to individual faces filled with pride and dreams. Baker went on to summarize some of the human conflicts seen in the past decade and some of the reasons behind those conflicts; economic inequality, nationalism, religious intolerance, greed and racism or ethnocentrism. "Considering possible topics for this year," said Baker, "it seemed that the best topic we can address right now is human rights. Do we know what those rights are? Can we help educate the world, starting with this contest?"

Each of the student teams was given an envelope. In each envelope was one of the 30 Articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948. For example, the team from KVCC will develop a PSA that relates to Article 26: "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages . . ." Other team assignments included the right to equal

Cartoon Challenge (Baker) continued on 19

Kalamazoo Valley Community College

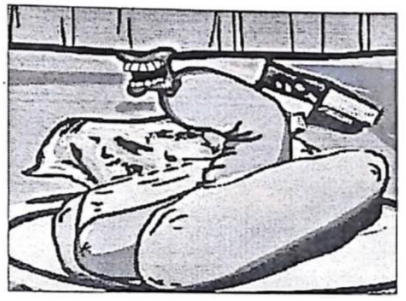
College for Creative Studies

Kendall College of Art & Design

San Jose State University

Cartoon Challenge (Baker) continued from 18

Grand Valley State University



Wayne State University

treatment under law, the right to a nationality, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the right to be free from torture, or from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Each PSA contains the same five-second conclusion, ending with the tagline "You are human. You have rights." KAFI organizers hope the PSAs will be aired and that a sponsor interested in expanding this effort to include the remaining 20 Articles within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will come forward.

The ten teams of student animators hail from Capilano College (North Vancouver, British Columbia), Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, Ohio), St. Clair College (Windsor, Ontario), San Jose State University (San Jose, California), Grand Valley State University (Allendale, Michigan), College for Creative Studies (Detroit, Michigan), Max the Mutt Animation School (Toronto, Ontario), Wayne State University (Detroit, Michigan), Kendall School of Design (Grand Rapids, Michigan) and Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

The final PSA's are available online for your viewing pleasure at http://kafi.kvcc.edu. The festival will be creating a video promoting the Cartoon Challenge and its PSA's on BetaSP with the help of Lawrence Productions.

David Baker
KAFI Festival Director
dbbaker@kvcc.edu

The Milwaukee International Film Festival

The Milwaukee International Film Festival, November 6-16, is releasing a Call For Entries for submission to its Midwest Independent Film & Video Competition. Final deadline is August 4, entry forms are available on their website at www.milwaukeefilmfest.org

Students, amateurs, and professionals are all encouraged to apply. Short and feature subjects are accepted in all genres including narrative, documentary, experimental, and animation.

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FALL 2003

ASIFA/Central

FRAME by FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

FALL 2003

Festival Updates: Four Personal Perspectives

by Deanna Morse

Ottawa Animation Festival

We recently were honored to be able to screen the Best of the Ottawa Animation Festival at my university. The purpose of this screening was to highlight the Ottawa festival and to encourage students to travel up north for the upcoming SAFO (Student Animation Festival of Ottawa) which will be held October 16-19, 2003. http://www.awn.com/ottawa/safo03

That evening, I was reminded of the importance of this kind of festival and screening experience. We saw a broadly international selection of films: from Mexico, the U.K., Australia, Sweden, Norway, the USA, and Canada. And the variety of techniques with such a diversity of media was inspiring to see. The represented films included animations with clay, stop-action, 3D, drawn, Flash, and merged techniques.

The audience was enthusiastic, and lively, very appreciative of this film program. I asked some folks what their favorites were. Samurai Jack was popular - this short has a stunning sequence where the main character puts on a blindfold, and we hear the sounds around him. It's surprising how the lack of animation is so effective! Hasta Los Huesos, a clay animation, was a first film about the afterlife, which impressed several of my students.

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and more ...

That film had fully animated characters with fluidly moving sweat, hair and other appendages. The NSPCC Cartoon was a grim PSA which generated laughter and then shock to push home the message of child abuse awareness. Leunig: How Democracy Works hit close to home as this Australian Cartoonist followed the vote in it's path from voter to incinerator to the energy ... to light up a 40 watt bulb above a urinal! Slakt and Family was a favorite of a number of people, as it used drawn animation and compelling characters to follow the humorous stories of extended family relations. For me, I was most engaged by the springy scratchy rubber band moves of Flux. That film compressed a lifetime into a few minutes of very snappy animation.

The Ottawa Fest is an important, professionally run animation festival, with a long history of showing the best in international animation. As you know, they were threatened earlier this year with funding cuts, which would be a major loss to those of us in North America. Let's continue to support it in any way we can.

Thanks to the Ottawa Animation Festival for sharing this program, and best wishes for continued success at their Ottawa and SAFO festivals.

Kalamazoo Animation Festival International

I recently found this link to one

Festival Update (Morse) continued on 4

Greetings from the President

by Jim Middleton

So there I was, calmly working through a multiple choice exam on pharmacology, wondering if the insertion of questions involving naltrexone would be beyond the scope of the section...and I remembered that I had to finish an edit on futuristic kitchen film clips for a project involving futuristic kitchens... and that reminded me that I had left the water running in the kitchen sink, and that bothered the dog, who ran barking into the office...and I got him his allergy medicine, which then reminded me to include a question on antihistamines into the multiple choice mix.

And that made me consider cycles, so I got out my bicycle, and the odometer needed a battery, and I wound up at Radio Shack, and the clerk was drawing on his pipe, and that reminded me that I had to give out a drawing assignment for next Tuesday's animation class, and I was on the linear park, and I thought linear-cycles-drawing, and figured this is really, really overthinking the situation, and that I could go for a cup of coffee.

So I was at the coffee shop, and the espresso machine was going tapoketa-pocketa, and that reminded me of Walter Mitty, and that reminded me of James Thurber, and that reminded me of his "Touche!" cartoon, and that reminded me of the National Lampoon "Toupe!" parody of it, and that reminded me that I still hadn't turned off the water in the kitchen.

So I was pretty tired by the time I got back home, but the power had gone off, so the pump had stopped, so the water had stopped, so all was well, except the dog was still pretty annoyed.

So while I was thinking about being annoyed, I thought about how annoyed Bill O"Reilly was on C-Span when Al Franken called him a liar, and that reminded me how fun Franken's book, "Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them" was, and that reminded me of how fun his previous book, "Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot" was (and how it's such a great title that I should say it twice, as in "Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot") and that reminded me of a cartoon project I have been working on about His Royal Shrubness called "Political Asylum," and how I showed clips of it at an ASIFA gathering, and then I remembered that Jennifer was waiting for me to get some comments to her for the upcoming ASIFA issue, and I thought, what a wonderful time to share my day with some of my closest friends.

So what's new with you?

Jim Middleton

ASIFA/Central Mission Statement
ASIFA: Association Internationale du Film d' Animation

The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. — adopted 3/92

ASIFA/Central Volunteers and Project Leaders

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April 23 – 25, 2004

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To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

Report from SIGGRAPH 2003

by Deanna Morse

I was pleased to speak and participate this year at SIGGRAPH 2003 Computer Graphics and Animation Conference. Billed as the world's largest conference of computer graphics and interactive techniques, drawing over 40,000 people, the conference was held in San Diego, CA the last week of July.

The six day conference included courses, a two day educators program, papers, art show, film screenings, academic exhibits, a trade show, and emerging technologies exhibit and presentations. It's an enormous gathering where industry representatives, artists, innovators, researchers, and educators in the field share their successes and current research on the leading edge of computer graphics and animation.

I was selected to present my DVD "MOVE CLICK MOVE" in a 10 minute "Quick Take" Educator's Session. It was an exciting presentation for me. After my ten minutes of fame, people ran to the desk, with $20 bills in hand. I sold copies to almost half of the audience there -- and had this big wad of bills and checks afterwards which I put into the scholarship fund.

But the day before my scheduled presentation, I had a little surprise. I went to a course, Appreciation and Criticism of the Short Animated Film, where one of the co-presenters had canceled at the last minute due to illness, and was asked to fill in, presenting my DVD. I gave an impromptu 1/2 hour presentation, and it happened so fast, I didn't have time to be nervous in the big lecture hall.

Besides my personal presentations, of course, there were several other highlights. In a fast paced papers preview evening, over a hundred researchers gave three minute overviews of their current research in computer graphics and animation. Much was related to video games, presenting algorithms for mapping people and objects on shapes, or doing real time rendering using pre-rendering algorithms. PIXAR showed some new surfacing techniques, where fabrics move more realistically. But one of the most interesting paper to me was a template for the web where text copy automatically would resize based on the window parameters. It used the New Yorker as a reference for style, and the pages looked pleasing no matter what resolution they were viewed at.

There was a special session on the Making of Nemo where they described building the objects, creating animation on fish one fin, smile and eyebrow at a time, arranging the coral like ikebana, and showed us ways they were able to mimic underwater photography. There was another in-depth panel from Industrial Light and Magic where workers described their path from high school claymations to their current successful positions. The Electronic Theater screenings offered hours of viewing of commercial and student animations, much of which I had seen at other festivals. A panel in the educator's workshop surveyed current trends and issues in animation education (see sidebar article with tips for students).

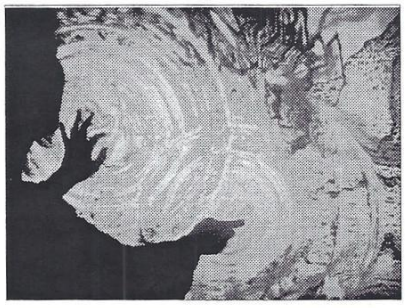
I met a student who was at SIGGRAPH for the first time. She raved about the experience in a way that I identified with, "I thought I know a lot, and now that I am here I realize I know nothing." SIGGRAPH often feels like there is an overwhelming wealth of material for you to experience and digest, and you just get to sample little bits here and there during the week.

The art and new technology research presentations were interesting, although it didn't seem like much research was breaking new ground this year. Of interest was Smart/Touch, a haptic system where you wore an electrode on your finger to help you "see/feel" colors. Also, there was a piano that created harmony based on your improvisation, and a painting that rippled when you touched it. And there was a high definition monitor, that displays more levels of contrast, giving more of a film look. But the most creepy was Food Simulator, a device that gave you the sensation of eating food when you bit on it. Apparently, the device had a bone-vibration microphone in it, and squirted a scent of sweet, sour, bitter, or salty at your tongue. But the idea of sharing a cloth-covered bite with hundreds of attendees kept most of my friends from experiencing it... and I chose not to partake of the virtual nibbles either.

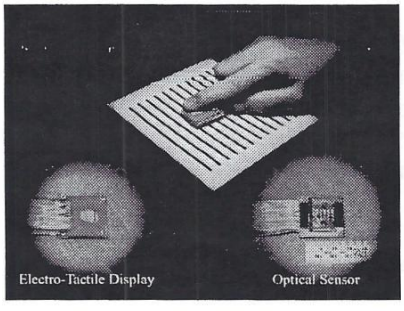
SIGGRAPH (Morse) continued on 4

SIGGRAPH (Morse) continued from 3

Of course, part of the appeal of SIGGRAPH is the opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones. I appreciated the chance to hang out with my roomie Kim White, a former ASIFA Central member who is now at PIXAR and was the lead lighting director on Nemo. Kim told me that she did the master lighting for the coral scenes in about 6 weeks. This master lighting plan was the basis for the first third of the film. Using the master, they would then light and tweak individual scenes, which would take at least another week per shot to place the dozens of CG lights. Kim continues to love her job at PIXAR, and she sends her greetings back to ASIFA Central friends!



Ripple Painting



Smart Touch

Food Simulator

SIGGRAPH 2004 is scheduled for August 8-12, 2004, and promises to be bigger, since it is in Los Angeles, right in the heart of the industry. Deadlines for proposals are coming up soon. Information on the conference can be found at www.siggraph.org/s2004.

Deanna Morse is an animator and professor at Grand Valley State University, MI. She recently completed a DVD collection of her work. More information can be found on web site: faculty.gvsu.edu/morsed or email morsed@gvsu.edu

Festival Updates (Morse) continued from 1

of the favorite films at last year KAFI festival. You can dance along with a Lemonjelly at this web site: http://www.airside.co.uk/business/movingimage/ljducksvidmov.html.

Zagreb International Animation Festival

I am excited to say that I have been invited to be on the selection committee for the upcoming Zagreb Animation Festival. The festival will be held in Zagreb Croatia June 14-19, 2004. I was honored to attend this festival a few years ago, and I strongly recommend two things: 1) that you enter it, and 2) that you attend it. Zagreb is a beautiful town, and the festival is friendly, well organized, and promises to be a great chance to screen animation and make new friends. Their web site is: http://www.animafest.hr/

ASIFA/East Animation Festival

I have received a VHS tape of the ASIFA East Animation Festival, which I can make available if you want to host an ASIFA Central screening: an evening of animation in your community. Please contact me if you are interested.

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Random Notes While Creating a Lecture on Character Design and Development *by Jim Middleton*

While preparing an outline on character development for my introduction to animation class, I came upon the following examples that might be of interest to those trying to create something similar for a presentation of their own. None of these examples is necessarily the result of extensive research; however, the sources for these examples are frequently variable and can be elusive, especially when dealing with films that have fallen under the realm of "public domain." For those interested in procuring many of these titles, I suggest you work rapidly–a major source, Grapevine Video (www.grapevine.com) is closing up shop November 23, 2003.

The general intent of the lecture presentation is to demonstrate the difficulty in maintaining a distinct character when a model sheet is lacking, and even then, how a character design can evolve due to the demands of sound, budget, and public tastes.

The main characters being explored for this overview are Felix the Cat, Bimbo, Flip the Frog, and the ubiquitous Mickey Mouse.

Felix the Cat – Pat Sullivan, producer; Otto Messmer, animation

One of the most popular animated characters, Felix fell prey to incredibly poor production decisions on the part of producer Pat Sullivan just as sound was making its impact on animation in the late 1920s. Three examples serve here to show the character's evolution: *Feline Follines* (1919) (source: DVD *Felix!* from Slingshot DVD and Cinematheque Quebecoise) – Felix is drawn in an angular, decidedly flat manner and at times more resembles a dog than anything feline. The titles are animated one word at a time, giving the modern day viewer an idea of the level of speed reading in post-WWI America.

Forty Winks (1930) (source: *Felix the Cat, Volume II* from Grapevine Video) Felix resembles the rounded familiar character, but the production uses sound only as an afterthought, with effects added after production; little effort is made to integrate sound or sound effects. What Sullivan had Messmer create here is essentially a silent film, and it can be watched just as easily with the sound off. In fact, with the horrible, grating voice being given to Felix, the film is better watched silently–the result is a character that could do little to endear himself to his Depression-era audience.

Bold King Cole (1935) (from a public domain compilation of Felix cartoons distributed by Trans-Atlantic Video, 1985 issue, and it is decomposing rapidly in its "bargain EP" mode) – With new producers and color, Felix becomes "Disneyfied" in this brief resurrection in the 1930s. Before interacting with King Cole, Felix is introduced singing a happy little song about how well he gets along with Nature in a pleasant child-pitched tenor just before he gets nailed by a suddenly-appearing thunderstorm. The assertive, often aggressive cat is reduced to a simpering coward. His appearance is still familiar, but is given a more rounded design in keeping with the tastes of the time.

Bimbo – Fleischer Studios

My Old Kentucky Home (1926) (from Inkwell Images "Ko-Ko Song Car-tunes" 2003 issue) – In this, the first time an animated character spoke on-screen, Bimbo is a black dog who speaks his lines with slow-motion detail. Most of the sequence makes use of some sound synchronization, but the apparent lack of a model sheet has him removing his teeth while still having his teeth, and his size shifts from shot to shot. Nonetheless, this is a historically significant event in animation, and predates

Character Design (Middleton) continued on 6

Character Design (Middleton) continued from 5

Disney's entry into the genre by at least two years.

Bimbo's Initiation (1931) (*Betty Boop, the Definitive Edition,* Volume 3 Surrealism) – The surreal antics feature a canine-based Betty Boop character interacting with a Bimbo who has become more rounded and "appealing" although here, too, his appearance varies with many shots. This is a recurring problem with defining the Bimbo character throughout much of the early sound Fleischer output. The rubbery Betty Boop here is also far removed from the appearances she will make in the later *Snow White* and *Old Man of the Mountain.*

Flip the Frog – Pat Powers, producer, Ub Iwerks, animation

Fiddlesticks (1929) (from *Ub Iwerks Cartoon Festival*, Blackhawk films VHS release, now unavailable, but may be on alternative DVD sources) – Flip's first appearance, also in an early 2-strip color process (Cinecolor, another Powers innovation), is as a frog, webbed feet and all, but he clacks his teeth at the audience in brief cutaways that are somehow a bit disturbing. His voice is a squawk, and in keeping with many of the cartoons of the time, spends most of his screen time dancing and performing in a vaudevillian style.

The Office Boy (1931) (from *Cartoons that Time Forgot, Iwerks Collection Vol. 2*, DVD Image entertainment) – Flip becomes "humanized" but still in the rubber hose school of animation. His voice is Mickey Mouse in tone, and the mood of the entire short is manic, disjointed, and replete with humor soon to be forbidden by the Hayes office.

Mickey Mouse – Disney productions

The mighty mouse. His evolution is even documented on mugs available from Disney stores. However, these examples show how even an icon can have crises in personal development.

Plane Crazy (1928) (VHS source, Disney Cartoon Classics, "Minnie" or the Walt Disney Treasures series on DVD, "Mickey Mouse in Black and White") – Like the early Felix sound issues, *Plane Crazy* was filmed as a silent, with sound added later. However, the graphic style of Iwerks in this short give this roughhouse tribute to Charles Lindbergh a delightful life of its own.

Steamboat Willie (1928) – Again, again, and again, this is not the first sound cartoon, but the first sound *Mickey Mouse* cartoon. In the recently issued DVD series, a long-censored sequence featuring Mickey creating music from the breasts of a sow after her piglets have been pulled away, has been restored (my jaw dropped). This film demonstrates the difference that sound makes in a completely integrated production – the pacing is less manic, the animation becomes more rhythmic, the cutting of the scenes more deliberate...although I still can't figure out what the parrot is saying at the end.

The Band Concert (1935) – With the first Mickey Mouse cartoon in color, Mickey still has black ovals as eyes, and the music controls the entire cartoon. In fact, aside from the histrionics of the ice cream vendor Donald Duck, nobody speaks a word...the gags are all punctuated by the William Tell overture or Turkey In The Straw...tunes notable for their public domain status.

The Sorcerer's Apprentice (1940) – Mickey is redesigned to have "real eyes" with differently shaded eyelids in this deservedly-famous sequence of the ill-fated *Fantasia*. The cartoony appearance of the Band Concert has here given way to the artoony efforts by the Disney craftsmen.

The Simple Things (1953) (VHS Walt Disney Cartoon Classics, "Mickey," 1984 compilation)

Character Design (Middleton) continued on 7

ASIFA / Central's 2004 Midwest Animators Conference Set for April 23-25, 2004!

Mark your calendar for the last weekend in April! ASIFA / Central's Midwest Animators Conference returns to the DoubleTree Guest Suites Hotel in Downers Grove, Illinois. Early Bird registration begins on October 31, 2003 and runs until January 31, 2004.

Early Bird registrants with a valid ASIFA membership will pay $40.00 while students will pay $35.00 (proof of current student status required) and non-members $50.00. Your ASIFA membership (any chapter) must be current as of December 31, 2003 to receive the members' discount. After January 31st the fees will go up $5.00, so save money and register early. Advance registration ends on March 13th, 2004. Registration fees include an on-site buffet lunch. Watch the ASIFA / Central web site for a link to the conference page. We are also planning to offer on-line registration for the first time in our history.

We are planning a great conference! We will again be in the Forum stadium auditorium on Saturday. Friday night will be devoted to a networking party in our hospitality suite. Saturday will see a full lineup of speakers and programs that will be announced in the near future. We wind down Sunday morning with potluck breakfast in the hospitality suite.

Downers Grove is west of Chicago and near major expressways, O'Hare and Midway airports. There is AMTRAK and commuter rail service to the downtown Downers Grove train station, which is a short hotel shuttle or cab ride from the hotel.

Registration fees do not include hotel accomodations, and you must make your own hotel reservations. The conference hotel is an all suites facility with rooms that include a refrigerator and microwave. There is also a private indoor pool, jacuzzi and sauna as well as a fitness center. To make your registration call the DoubleTree at 630-971-2000 or toll free at 1-800-222-TREE. Other hotels are conveniently located close to the conference and information on them will be made available through the conference web page.

We are looking for volunteers to help at the conference as well as speakers. If you are interested in helping out during the conference, please contact us. If you are interested in presenting a program, or know someone you think would be a great speaker, let us know. We are also seeking sponsors to help defray some of the costs for the conference. If you or your business is interested in helping support our event, please get in touch with us. Send your communications to Dave Daruszka at asifaconference@aol.com or call at 773-233-8788.

If you attended the 10th Annual Conference, you know what a unique event this is. If you haven't been to a conference its time to come out and join in the fun. We promise you a weekend to remember. See you in April!

CALL FOR CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS & SPEAKERS!

We are looking for volunteers to help at the conference as well as speakers. If you are interested in helping out during the conference, or if you are interested in presenting a program, or know someone you think would be a great speaker, let us know. Send your communications to Dave Daruszka at asifaconference@aol.com or leave a message at 773-233-8788.

WANT TO BE A CONFERENCE SPONSOR?

We are seeking sponsors for the conference. If you or your business is interested in supporting our event, please get in touch with us. Sponsorships are available for as little as $100.
Watch the ASIFA / Central web site for more info coming soon! Send your contact information to Dave Daruszka at asifaconference@aol.com or leave a message at 773-233-8788.

Some Notes for Students from Industry Representatives Speaking at SIGGRAPH 2003: The Future of Computer Animation Education Panel

"Think of the end of school as the beginning of your learning."

It is important to show that you worked successfully as a group member.

The industry is looking to see that you can think in different ways, not just one software program, not just one perspective.

Industry values evidence of creative problem solving.

"Students need to take responsibility to do some research in the industry. It is a young industry and has changeable terms."

Basic business skills are a plus.

Some programming skills are a plus.
Take it on yourselves to seek out on-line job descriptions.

"Develop your artistic sensibilities but also be practical."

"Because this field is fluctuating, and the industry is in its infancy, you need to be a generalist."

Guidelines for your demo reel:

- 3 minutes is considered long.
- Quality work only.
- Identify your contribution, hopefully it is from a collaborative effort.
- On your reel, show sample work of what you are looking for in the job
- Show us something interesting, how you might solve a complex problem.
- Don't stress the package you used to create it. It is impressive, however, if you take a basic software program, like Bryce, and pushed it further than what it could do.
- Programming skills are useful.

You need to show you have a good visual eye.

Character Design (Middleton) continued from 6

– Mickey Mouse, for the brief moments where he is actually in the picture, is given "real ears" that move in perspective to compliment his real eyes. Unfortunately, in this bland entry into the cadre of the Mouse's work, he plays fourth fiddle following Pluto, a seagull (that falls flat in mid-air, perhaps interacting with a background that wasn't there), and an ornery clam. Compared to even the primitive nature of Mickey's silent releases, this insipid short is incredibly painful to experience even as an academic example of a character's evolutionary (devolutionary) design.

I encourage my students to create model sheets with as much elaboration as they can muster, and I use these examples to demonstrate their value. Truth to tell, they usually end up doing much as I do–namely, scratch something out quickly to appease the instructor, and then sit back to watch the cartoons.

– Jim Middleton

Letter from the Editor

After editing the Frame by Frame newsletter since 1997, this will be my last edition. I want to thank everyone who has contributed articles over the years, especially Deanna Morse and Jim Middleton whom I have called upon numerous times to help fill in the gaps.

You can catch me on the web in 2004 bringing you a revamped ASIFA Central web site. Please continue to send me articles, member news, etc and I will be happy to include it on the site.

Jennifer Peterson
jenniferp@technical-animation.com

What's Happening in the Winner's Corner! (Part 1)

edited by M. L. Haynes

Aaron Bowers reports his progress as the winner of the 8th International Helen Victoria Haynes WORLD PEACE Storyboard Scholarship!

Synopsis

Three teenagers are taking a test in a high school class. One student is constantly receiving harder questions on the exam. The final question asks him "how can world peace be achieved?" Using his ingenuity, he answers as simply and effectively as he knows how.

Aesthetic Statement

This piece will incorporate 3-D objects with traditional 2-D characters. I will be gearing the characters towards the style of Matt Groening, of 'The Simpsons' and 'Futurama' fame. I will also try and use some aspects of "Courage the cowardly dog" and "Dexter's lab" as far as coloring and backgrounds are concerned. To accomplish this I will be using programs such as Softimage, After-effects, and USanimation. Sound in this piece will be compiled with the free version of protocols sound editing software. The instrumentation will be provided by Ben Lambert and myself.

Progress

"So far, so good. [Faculty Advisor] Paloma Boiles, and I have been meeting through the summer and worked out a production schedule. Progress is good. Finalized storyboards are near completion. Soundtrack is near completion.

I have incorporated the musical talents of friends and have a nice score. Pre-production is near completion.

Production is scheduled to begin in October. Until next time...

For rules and application to the 2004 International Helen Victoria Haynes WORLD PEACE Storyboard & Animation Scholarship, please visit: www.hvh-worldpeace.org/. Competition opens at 9:00am January 1, 2004. **Deadline is April 1, 2004.**

M. L. Haynes (founder of the International Helen Victoria Haynes WORLD PEACE Storyboard & Animation Scholarship) conceived and directed the animated short-short-short 'Peace 2002' and co-coordinated the 7th, 8th & 10th annual Midwest Animators Conferences for ASIFA / Central. M.L. is a music composer, producer, project coordinator and official computer geek.

For more info about M. L. visit http://www.asifa.org/animate/membdir.htm or contact M. L. Haynes at haynesworldpeace@aol.com.

Stop-Motion Animation Workshop with Tom Brierton

Date: **December 12-14**
Location: **Chicago, Illinois (exact address TBA)**

Chicago-based stop-motion filmmaker/educator Tom Brierton will be holding a two-and-a-half day intensive workshop on stop-motion animation December 12-14th in Chicago, Illinois.

Credentials:
Brierton has been practicing stop-motion animation for 31 years, and has directed/animated the stop-motion short, NO EXIT?, which has been shown nationally at various film festivals, as well as the Music Box Theatre in Chicago, IL. Brierton is the author of "Stop-Motion Armature Machining" (McFarland and Co., Pub, 2002), as well as "Stop-Motion Puppet Fabrication-Build-up, Foam Injection, and Finishing Techniques" (also through McFarland, due out Dec., 2003). Currently producing/ directing THE LABYRINTH, (a stop-motion animated film based on the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur), Brierton has also taught stop-motion and CGI character animation at Columbia College Chicago for the past six years.

Topics to be covered at the workshop will be:

1. Introductions
2. Screened examples of stop-motion animation
3. Puppet Design
4. Wire armature fundamentals/creation
5. Enrollees will create a wire armature of a human character.

Demonstration on using metal milling and metal lathe machines for the creation of a professionally machined puppet armature, with a show-and-tell of the six main types of armature joints (machines used will be the miniature Sherline mill and lathe, as well as a drill press and drop saw):

1. The dowel joint
2. The hinge joint
3. The sandwich plate bearing joint
4. The swivel joint
5. The universal joint
6. The collet joint

(NOTE: Due to safety/insurance reasons, no enrollee will be allowed to run any of the machines.)

Demonstration of the foam injection process:

1. Sculpting a puppet in clay over an armature
2. Creating the mold halves using Ultracal-30 mold-making material
3. The mixing of hot foam
4. Use of the foam injection gun
5. Baking the mold
6. Removing the foam casting from the mold
7. Removing flashing, painting technique and detailing

Enrollees will take turns animating their build-up wire armatured puppets:

A demonstration will be given on using a video lunchbox sync and shooting digitally with a Sony TRV 900 digital camera.

Enrollees will practice animating during this portion of the workshop, creating their own performance animation. Or, the enrollee can animate their wire framed build-up puppet, or a professionally machined human armature or a four-legged animal armature. Machined armatures will be provided.

Finished animation can be outputted to videotape. Enrollee must provide their own VHS cassette (either a SVHS or regular VHS cassette is acceptable).

The enrollees, foam puppets (which they have produced during the workshop) will be the property of the enrollee.

Cost of the workshop
The workshop is $290 per person, and will include materials and supplies, as well as a complimentary lunch on Saturday and Sunday (meat and vegetarian sandwiches, cheese, condiments, chips and soft drinks). There will be a maximum seating of 15 enrollees. Enrollment will be on a first-come, first serve basis. The location of the workshop will be designated a non-smoking (smoke-free) area. Those wishing to smoke will be able to do so outside during breaks.

For further information

Please contact Tom Brierton at:

773-924-1424
Tbrierton@aol.com

See you at the workshop!

Cast Your Vote for the 2004 ASIFA Central Board

The following are summaries of statements previously published in the summer edition.

Jim Middleton for President
I have been serving as ASIFA Central President for the past couple of years and would like to remain in that post for a few more... One of the most important roles that ASIFA can fill for its members is to provide a fraternal (or sororital) network. Our recent retreat, tied in with the amazing KAFI festival, provided ample opportunities for educators and enthusiasts to hob-nob, cavort, and shamelessly self-promote. These are the activities that ASIFA Central can do incredibly well, and with the interconnectivity offered by the internet, our members can keep current with the latest rollercoaster journeys in the animation industry.

Deanna Morse for Treasurer
I am willing to continue as Treasurer of ASIFA Central, and would like to stay active on the ASIFA/Central Board. I have been treasurer for the past five years or so. I have served on the board in some capacity since 1989: as President, treasurer, or membership chair.

Jennifer Peterson for Web Designer / Editor
I would like to serve as Web Designer and Editor on the 2004 ASIFA Central Board. I have served as vice president and newsletter editor since 1997. I would like to continue my presence on the board but switch from maintaining the newsletter to maintaining the web site.

Mary Lou Haynes for Board Position
Mary Lou has served in numerous capacities in ASIFA/ Central since the mid-1970's, including many years as a member of the Board of Directors. She has coordinated 3 annual Midwest Animators Conferences & Retreats with her husband and longtime ASIFA / Central member, David Daruszka.

David Daruszka for Board Position
My interest in becoming a member of the ASIFA Central board would be to provide my years of experience in management and not-for-profits to the organization. I have previously served on the board, and as President.

Melissa Bouwman for Web Correspondent
I would like to run as web correspondent - writing introductory copy for sections of our soon to be revamped web site. In that capacity, I would work closely with Jennifer Peterson.

David Baker for Membership Chair
As Membership chair, I would like to help build the ranks of ASIFA Central. ASIFA / Central is in a unique position to be able to be a crossroads of many of animation disciplines and artistic cultures. I feel that diversity in any group is good, however strength comes from pulling these resources together with a cohesive vision.

Cast your votes on page 13.

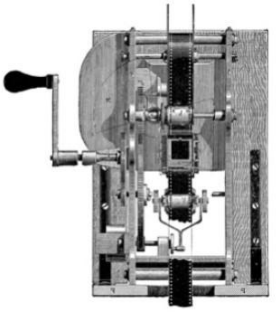
ASIFA Central Newsletter and Currents au Courant
SumSumSummertime 2018

Greetings from The President, *Brad Yarhouse*

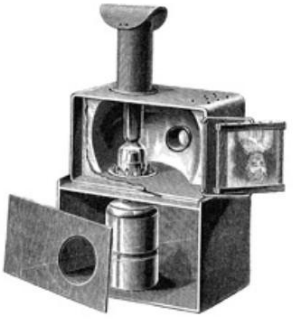
We have had a busy winter and lots of exciting opportunities in the works for Summer and this coming Fall. Our newly expanded board is very active having met every month this year to discuss and work on upcoming events. I am so excited to be part of such a dynamic team!

As president, my main concern is with building community. I believe that with community, artists flourish. History is laden with artists, scientists, musicians, writers, etc. joining together and transforming themselves and the world. Excellence doesn't happen in a vacuum. Whether we are networking for jobs, looking for moral support for our dreams and visions, collaborators to create with or just people to hang out with and have fun, community is what allows an organization to live and breathe. Facebook and other online systems help, but gathering in person can enrich us in ways more dimensional and nuanced.

Finally, a number of our members are professors and at this time of year, giving a gift membership to encourage a graduate is a nice way to celebrate their accomplishments and connect them with our community of animators.



If you have questions, (or answers!) please don't hesitate to contact me either through Facebook or via email:
brad@yarhouse.com
Happy Animating!

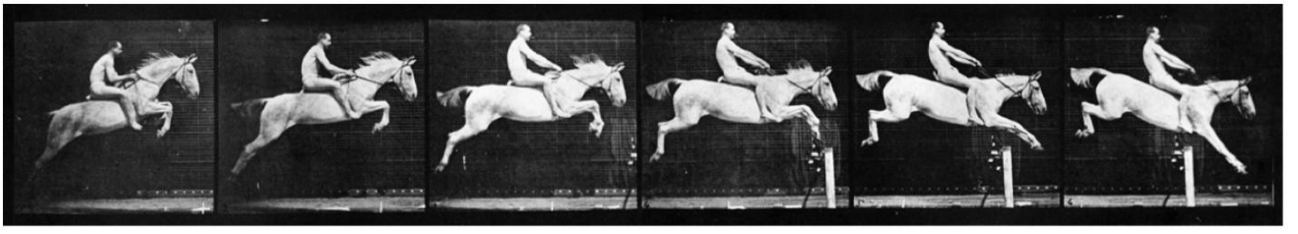


Report on the Celebration of Women Animators Event and Workshop - *By Charles Wilson*

Lotte Reiniger

On Saturday, March 30th, Charles Wilson and Gretchen Vinnedge hosted "A Celebration of Women Animators" at the Grand Rapids Community Media Center and the Wealthy Theater. The morning event had Charles teaching a history of women animators using an interactive quiz and showcasing some original artwork from his private collection that was created by Helena Smith Dayton, the world's first woman animator. Afterwards, he spoke about Lotte Reiniger's history, which included showing some rare films of hers, as well as revealing some historical artifacts of Lotte's that have survived to this day--like an animation trick-table where she created one of her last films in Canada and the only surviving copy of her first animated film "Ornament of the Lovestruck Heart" circa 1919, currently residing at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York.

Following the morning presentations, Charles and Gretchen hosted a silhouette/cut-out animation workshop where students were taught a little history about animators Lotte Reiniger, Lynn Dana Wilton, and Evelyn



Lambart, and then given a crash course on the DragonFrame animation software. For the rest of the afternoon, the students set to work creating their own films using silhouette and cut-out animation techniques. The films created by the students are available for viewing on the GRCMC's YouTube page at the following link: https://youtu.be/Igij_cNu_08.

Prince Achmed

Upcoming Events and New Initiatives

ANI-JAM 18 Our first foray into a collaborative animation will start on June 9th. It's happening physically in Grand Rapids, Michigan at the Community Media Center. 12:00- 3:00. Members will be able to connect long distance through Skype. Theme, length, structure to be determined.
(See Facebook for more information and ongoing discussion on ideas) examples -
Candy Jam (1986) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQcUqrKM3mc -
Anijam (1984) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llBjKoZ0dQk - Anijam 1984
Plympton's *Guard Dog* "global jam":
https://www.cartoonbrew.com/shorts/bill-plymptons-guard-dog-global-jam-24926.html
Mo Willem's *Life* anijam: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Tpndwr58KA

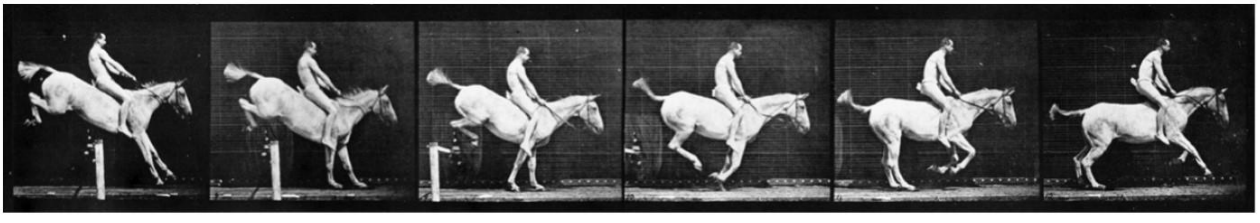
SUMMER RETREAT August 11 at the Wealthy Theatre and Community Media Center. Details will be announced on Facebook shortly. If last year's success was any indication, this year will probably involve workshops, animation screenings, Members Talks, & Food.

ANI-MEETUP (formally Animators Open Mike): we had a number of successful get-togethers in 2017 and this year in January. Our goal is to run these bi-monthly. At our Ani-Meetup's we watch animation from other ASIFA chapters and then spend time screening works-in-progress or finished works from our members. It's a great time to ask questions about something you're stuck on, talk about a challenge you overcame during production, and/or just show off the project you're working on.

IAD (International Animation Day) the announcements for IAD will be happening in the next couple weeks, look for it on our Facebook page. This years poster is being designed by René Castillo, an award winning animator from Mexico. Brad Yarhouse has been asked to act as Interim Coordinator for ASIFA and will continue as IAD coordinator for ASIFA Central.

NEW WEBSITE
Board Member, *Julie Goldstein* has been working on a new mobile friendly Central website. Expected to launch before the August picnic.

NEWSLETTER
Board Members *Jim Middleton* and *Robert Swieringa* are working on our newsletter. Look for deadlines and publication dates soon. If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter contact Jim at: jim.middletonrx@gmail.com.



CENTRAL NEWSLETTER - *Really* Late Autumn 2018

Notes from the President - Brad Yarhouse

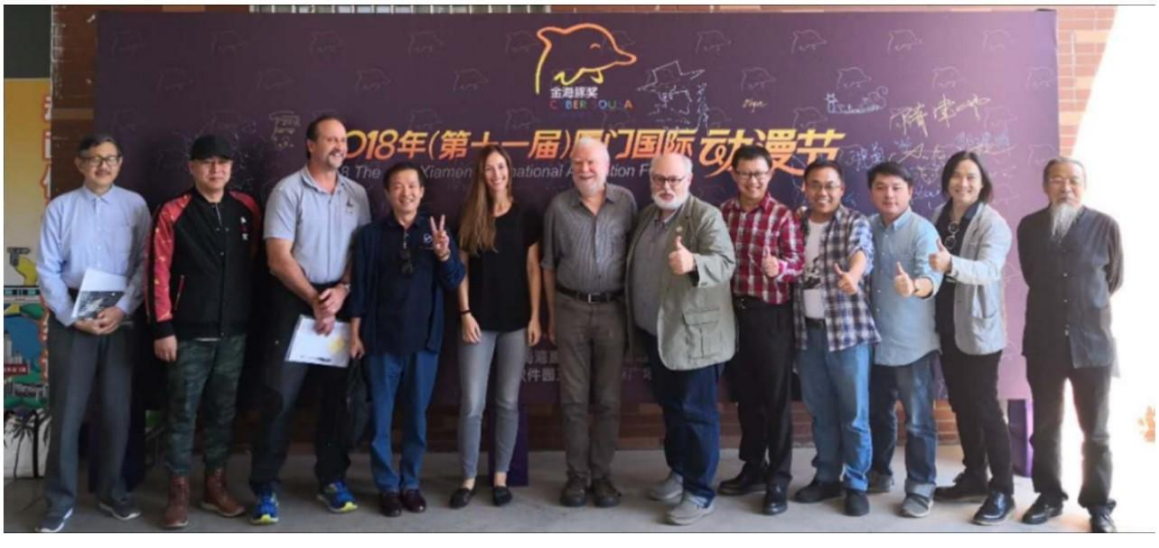
Here in the great midwest the fall is quickly giving way to winter as we move from one season to another. The fall for me is marked every year by not just the turning of the leaves but by International Animation Day. I have been celebrating and organizing IAD for ASIFA Central for the past six years. Last year we showed in 2 locations. This year was one of our most successful with showings in 7 locations: South Bend Indiana, Detroit, Allendale, Mt. Pleasant, and Grand Rapids, Michigan, St. Louis Missouri, and Rochester, Minnesota.

While this was going on throughout the midwest, I had the opportunity to travel to Xiamen China and act as a judge for the Xiamen International Animation Festival. International Animation Day happened to fall during my time in Xiamen and I had the opportunity to celebrate it with the ASIFA leadership from China. Surprisingly, we watched few animations, much of our time was spent with a question and answer session between animators, students, visiting judges, local professors, and general public. It was amazing to be sitting in China watching films from Poland and Mexico and sharing ideas, concerns and information across cultures.

This year I took on the position of interim coordinator for the global ASIFA IAD and we are already preparing for next year's events. With the success of ASIFA Central's ANI-JAM based on this years IAD poster I will be proposing a new ANI-JAM for 2019 potentially based on the new poster being developed in Greece by Giannis Koutsouris. Look for information about how you can participate after the first of the year.

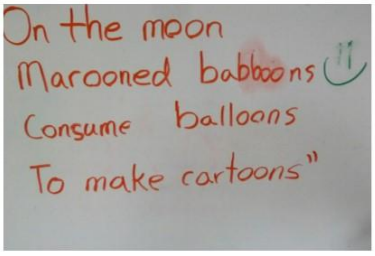
Also launching after the first of the year will be our new updated website for ASIFA Central. Look for an announcement early in January about the relaunch.

While I was in Xiamen celebrating International Animation Day I was struck by how connected I felt to all these people for whom I couldn't even speak their language. We were gathered for our love of animation. Animators are the storytellers, the communicators of ideas and emotions. We inspire, and move people young or old, rich or poor from all ethnicities. Around the world, the pursuit of animation is an opportunity for our many voices to be visually expressed. I am excited about how we at ASIFA Central are sharing our vision with the rest of the world. My thanks to all of you for contributing and making our community possible.



ASIFA Central Retreat - Floating in the Lip Synch - Jim Middleton

The Retreat Date, encoded: 81118, or as it appears upside-down, 81118
Regardless, it was August 11, 2018.



Repeat after me, "On the moon, marooned baboons consume balloons to make cartoons." These words became a part of the ASIFA Central DNA during the first day of its August Retreat of 2018. The artists-in-their-new residence gathered in triumphant triumvirates to dissect and digest Dragonframe at the Grand Rapids Community Media Center. Each team was given the magic lunar incantation and all the resources and carbohydrates necessary to complete their mission.

Snowball iCE microphonetics captured the aural moment, and everyone had until lunch to wrap up their respective contributions for an afternoon showing. Some cut it close, some just skipped lunch. Some may still be there, pondering the meaning of marooned baboons.

After the consequences of undiluted animatistic activity, came the lively stepping of seeking undiluted technical difficulties, because as we all know, there is a war amid computers to prove which system is the most loaded with obsequious convolutions (that last phrase appeared in your humble typist's head following some general anesthesia, and it demanded inclusion somewhere in print. That somewhere is here. The humble typist apologizes).

In a darkened, hushed, expectant micro cinema, the "marooned baboons" came to life, the ASIFA Central anijam was premiered in its IAD format, and then came some "open mike" screenings:

Jim Middleton shared scar tissue from his Photoshop-centric Anijammery process, one he has promised himself to never attempt again.

Chris DeWitt discussed animation history and theory, with a theme of common growth in the process.

Dylan Shay went positively pickles with his "dirty farm animals" using TV Paint and an emphasis on hitting deadlines and completing the workflow.

Chris Sagovac brought out strips of blank 16mm film and dared the attendants to get all inky on them, with enhancements from 1980s era press-on letters (with Bombay India Ink being all that and a bag of chips, I can tell you!) for an upcoming analog experience he is working on. This is the first mail-order animation, and Blue Cross doesn't cover the copays.

Mack Mayo shared a six week project with a nod to Napoleon Dynamite and Sweetwater Sound.

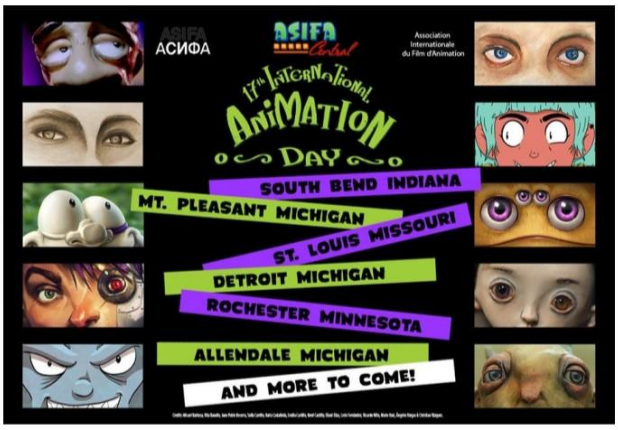
Lindsay Moore of CMU modestly shared her delicate watercolor abstractions, animated to accompany a soundtrack she also wrote and performed.

And to round things up, Steve Leeper shared his process within Photoshop to create sequential animation cut from rectangular snips of a 1920 x 1080 size abstraction he created. The file size was immense, but with very satisfying results (this could be a group tutorial in itself).

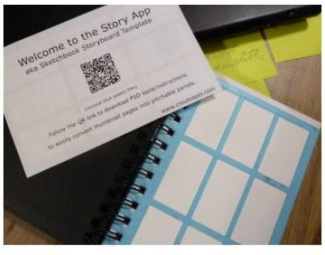
The final keyframe was a nearly complete presentation of the Ottawa '18 showreel. The snoozing gremlins returned to wreck plans with their diabolical sabotage (gremlins...oh murder).

Nothing remained but to plan for the Sunday picnic, the three-legged races, the official falling cake ceremony, and a shared discussion of essential animation library basics, and whether cheese or humus makes for a better dip with nacho chips. It will take a few more picnics to reach a consensus on that controversy.

72 frames from each contributor created this Jam Session for ASIFA Central's tribute to the IAD 2018



The Amazing Storyboarding Notebook - It Practically Tells its Own Story



Steve Leeper, now guiding the expanding animation program at Central Michigan University, premiered his storyboarding notebook at the August retreat as well - a template aligns the image, the binder stores the ideas, and it's very analog and very portable! It was put to immediate use during the lip synch exercise. Holy Maroon baboons, Batman, it came with its own mechanical pencil!

Notes from Canada - Another Festival Experience - *Charles Wilson*

There are a lot of great festivals in Ontario, like the Ottawa International Animation Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, and even the Montreal Stop Motion Festival in neighboring Quebec. However, there are also some smaller festivals out there in Canada that are worth a look. For example: the Toronto Animation Arts Festival International, where I spent the first weekend in November.

The iconic CN tower identifies Toronto

The Toronto Animation Arts Festival International will always hold a special place in my heart.

Back in 2014, after seventeen years of monthly payments, I had finally paid off my student loans. And as I wanted to do something special in order to celebrate my newfound financial freedom, and since I had been previously invited to TAAFI by friend and fellow animator Ben McAvoy (one of the co-founders of TAAFI), forty-eight hours after sending in that final payment and seeing that "$0.00" balance on my account, I found a cheap hotel, bought my festival pass, and hightailed it to Canada yelling "Freedom" at the top of my lungs as I crossed the border.

Four years ago, TAAFI was a weekend event filled with presentations from industry insiders, short film screenings (and the occasional feature), a robust artists alley where students and professionals sold their art, a relaxed figure drawing arena where you could hang out and draw models, and the ever entertaining Nelvana bouncing ball party on Saturday night -- where I first saw the Cybertronic Spree.

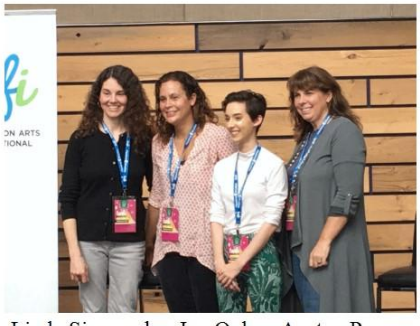
This year was different. As I encountered Ben in the Corus building down by the harbor on Saturday morning, he stated that the responses which they had been receiving indicated there was so much to see and do at TAAFI that it was becoming a little challenging for attendees. If you wanted to see a film screening, it meant that you would miss out on one, or more, of the industry insider presentations (and vice versa). So this year, the leadership of TAAFI decided to test out an idea: break the festival into two dates and hold them several months apart.

This worked out well for me as the first weekend of November was the newly christened "TAAFI Industry Animation Conference" filled to the brim with the industry presentations I love so much. And as always, TAAFI did not disappoint!

The opening keynote was headlined by none other than Fred Siebert who delighted us with stories about how he fell into a career in animation almost by accident. My schedule then followed with a presentation from Jessica Borutski and Dan Haskett, all dealing with the challenges of character design. For those who don't know, Jessica is the Canadian animator whose work includes Ren and Stimpy, the Looney Tunes, and Bunnicula. And you may know Dan Haskett from his character designs seen in this little arthouse film produced by Disney called 'The Little Mermaid'. Yes, Dan was the man who did the initial designs for Ariel, Sebastian, and Ursula. And Belle for Beauty and the Beast.

Jessica Borutski and Dan Haskett from Friday's Character Design discussion with Barry Sanders moderating

Saturday was also filled with presentations about the state of the Canadian animation industry which left me interested in checking out the web series 'Gary and his Demons' and the show hilariously named 'Captain Canuck' -- both darkly humorous looks at the horror and superhero genres respectively. Fun fact: The Canadian comic book industry imploded shortly after World War II due to the lifting of trade restrictions and the imposition of censorship. So when "Captain Canuck" debuted in 1975, it became 'the first successful Canadian comic book' since 1947, according to Wikipedia anyways.


Linda Siemensky, Jen Oxley, Austen Payne, and Michelle Melanson

The last presentation for the day was "The Big Pitch". Moderated by animation director Barry Sanders, two teams presented their ideas for animated shows to a jury consisting of Jessica Borutski, Jen Oxley, and Linda Simensky. The winner was Hamin Yang, a scriptwriter who was working on a pilot for his show idea. For those interested, Hamin's show is about an aging movie star who wants to be in the reboot of the show that launched his now flagging career. But in his misguided quest for a treatment that would make him young again, he ends up becoming a white man trapped in a young Chinese man's body. The rest of Yang's pilot was a funny and touching series of events as the main character learned the trials and tribulations of navigating Hollywood as an Asian. Hamin Yang filled his time telling stories relating frustrations with Asian stereotypes, dealing with the hypocrisy in PC culture, and the problems of trying to find an Asian woman who is interested in dating an Asian man -- most of which made it into the animated clips seen in his self-financed pilot. Afterwards, I had to congratulate him and thank him for pitching a show that I found immediately relatable given that part of my extended family is Vietnamese.

My Saturday ended early as I skipped the annual Bouncing Ball party -- was fighting a sore throat so figured a couple extra hours of sleep would do me some good.

Sunday began on a very strong note as, for two-and-a-half hours, Dan Haskett detailed his career in animation working on such varied properties as the Little Mermaid, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Looney Tunes, Raggedy Ann & Andy: A Musical Adventure, and the Simpsons, among others. Soft spoken and engaging, Dan punctuated his presentation by drawing characters under the camera and gifting students and professionals alike advice from his forty-two years of life spent working in animated film.

Dan Haskett discussing his animated career

Next, TAAFI brought Michelle Melanson, Jen Oxley, and Austen Payne to the stage for a discussion on women working in the field of animation ably moderated by Linda Siemensky. Austen, the youngest of the group, talked about facing the challenges of breaking into the industry as a young woman. The more mature Michelle and Jen discussed the work/life balance especially when you want to have a family but still maintain a career. All the while, Linda would interject stories about what the American animation industry was like for women ranging from the 1980's to the present day.

The rest of the day was a blur as attendees shuffled from one lecture hall to the other in order to hear about building an animation career in the Canadian market and working (and surviving) as an independent animator.

When I left Toronto for my five hour drive back to Michigan, I was already constructing plans for making the drive back in February for TAAFI part two: the animation screenings.

International ASIFA - Compai! Cheers! Domo Arigato Gozaimasu! Thank you!

Some notes from the Hiroshima International Animation Festival 2018 - Deanna Morse

This year marked the 17th International Animation Festival, held in Hiroshima, Japan at the end of August. Founded in 1985 by husband and wife animators Renzo and Sayoko Kinoshita, the festival runs every two years, with the theme Love and Peace. It is one of a very few festivals sanctioned by ASIFA. This honor comes from the way the festival is organized, honoring filmmakers and animation art.

I have had the honor of attending every festival since 1998, when I served on the selection committee viewing 1127 entries and selecting only 64 for competition. This year, they screened 2,842 entries, with only 75 selected for competition. It is a very competitive festival!

However, some of the films are in other programs, too – Student Programs, Animation from the World, Animation for Children, Animations for Peace. And the Animation Workshop Group Premiere! ASIFA/Central was represented with our children's film under the theme "A Funny Story." There are three screening halls with programs all day, each day.

In addition, there are more informal ways to connect with others. There is the annual picnic, hands on activities, art exhibits, a school exhibition area, two meeting rooms for behind the scenes talks with filmmakers. There are DVD and book sales, and snacks. There is a Seven Eleven store right across the street.

The festival mascot is a sort of a white seal like character, with a big red nose, called Lappy, and the local Lappy club organizes some cultural activities – visit a temple, have a tea ceremony, tour the Peace Park, how to wear a kimono. The last night, a young Estonia animator proudly wore his kimono to the bar after party, held at the tex-mex bar across the street. It is a bustling festival, with much to do. Lappy made several on stage and lobby appearances, and that ballooned up mascot can dance! There is always something happening. The main lobby had a great seating area for meet and greet.

Lappy *and a full moon!*

Deanna with festival volunteers

Oh, and this year, there was the ASIFA General Assembly, held every three years, and we had preparatory board meetings and executive board meetings.

And, of course, the traditional parties. The rooftop party, the ASIFA Japan party, and the elegantly catered opening and closing receptions. You won't go hungry at this festival.

All of this based just steps away from the Hiroshima Peace Park, such a profound and beautiful memorial of war and destruction. It is hot and muggy outside in August, and the cicadas are in concert. But in the air-conditioned festival hall, the warmth comes from the friendships and the connections with other animators.

Next festival is August 2020. Put it on your calendars. You will be so welcomed there. It is a bucket list festival, well worth the long flight to go there.

More at: Hiroanim.org

Animation Clips

Gary Schwartz in Armenia - *Locomotion* - https://youtu.be/DPAgIM5QVH4
Students at the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies created an animated film expressing the power & movement of locomotion in this animation workshop. It's an intensive hands-on kinetic visual storytelling animation workshop project.

TUMO Animation Crew

Rudolph the Reindeer (not a red scent here!)
Here is a link to a Christmas themed video by Chelsea Manifold and former ASIFA Central member, now living and working in NYC. She made this for College Humor (update provided by Gretchen Vinnedge). *Rudolph the Reindeer* - https://youtu.be/n-BreS9xQSk

Potential CMCFunding Disaster

The date has passed for public comments, but it is important that we are all aware that, even with a slight tilt to governmental direction in November, there remain many things being manipulated to tighten access and release of information. Here are some excerpts from a letter recently sent to Gretchen Vinnedge, Education Director for the CMC, who has always been open to hosting activities for ASIFA Central.
Jim Middleton, ASIFA Central Secretary

We here at Community Media Center want to let you know about a threat to the organization's funding that is on the verge of being implemented.

A proposed policy change from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) could have the effect of eliminating a primary source of funding for Community Media Center. That threatened funding is referred to as "franchise fees," and pays for the Public and Education cable television channels operated by CMC's GRTV. These channels are free speech platforms and exist for providing a place for the voices of our community.

Here are some of the details:

The proposed FCC policy would significantly change the structure in place for "franchise fees" – a structure that has been in place since the 1980s. The change would allow cable companies to essentially charge local municipalities for access to historically "in-kind" resources such as cable channels, I-net services, and access to the system to deliver content over these channels.

These in-kind resources are part of the public service obligation of cable companies for the ability to use public land to run their cable and fiber network for profit.

The ability for a cable company to charge municipalities for these in-kind services would cost our local governments millions of dollars. Local governments would be forced to choose between supporting community media or the millions of dollars of lost revenue.

This policy could eliminate the free access that community media centers provide to people to create their own media and broadcast it over the cable system. You could lose government transparency provided through televised local government meetings. This policy change could reduce your access to diverse information, the arts, and local voices in media. One of our most powerful and democratic community resources could be lost.

This is a historic decision-making process and today is the deadline for you to comment with your concerns.

CMC is working diligently to protect this community-benefit funding, and will continue to protect free speech platforms. With your help, we are here to do the vital work of "Building Community Through Media."
Linda Gallesch, Executive Director, Community Media Center

The Very Late ASIFA Central Autumn Newsletter - typist, edit, technical difficulties and errors by Jim Middleton, ASIFA Central Secretary (jim.middletonrx@gmail.com)
Contributors - Brad Yarhouse, Chuck Wilson, Deanna Morse, Gretchen Vinnedge, Gary Schwartz

ASIFA Central

Newsletter for April 2019

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the midwest chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975.

While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is made of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2019 including Ani-Jam's, Bi-monthly get-togethers, and an annual midwest retreat. ***The retreat this year is being hosted at Webster University in St. Louis MO, July 20-21, 2019.*** I hope you can join us in workshops, viewings, a symposium, and food! For up to date information follow us on our active Facebook page.

R. Brad Yarhouse
President ASIFA Central USA

ASIFA Central Board (but never bored)

President and IAD World Traveler - *Brad Yarhouse*

Secretary of Confused Distractions and Cracked Fonts - *Jim Middleton*

Coordinator for Membership and Technological Phenomena - *Charles Wilson*

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and Free Range Chickens - *Deanna Morse*

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Ink Tester - *Christopher Sagovac*

Interlocutor of Projects and Public Works - *Gretchen Vinedge*

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando - *Julie Goldstein*

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge - *Steve Leeper*

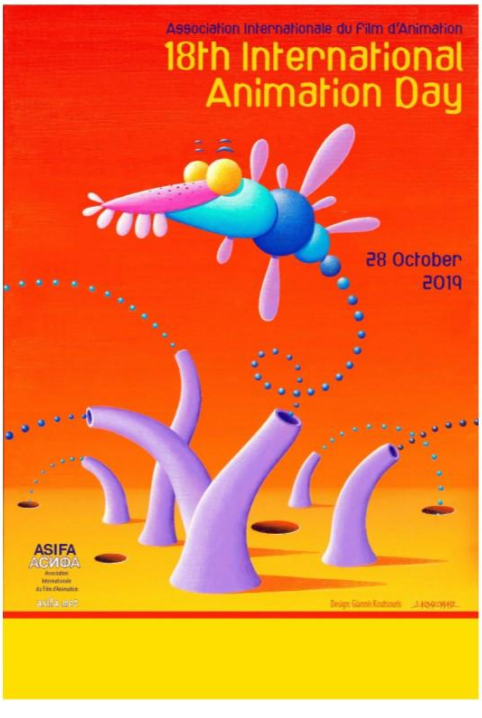
Tallest Human Ever to Animate - *Robert Swieringa*

Stopped Motionator and Tripod Convergence Coordinator - *Gary Schwartz*

CONGRATULATIONS TO BRAD YARHOUSE FOR BEING ELECTED THE IAD COORDINATOR BY ASIFA INTERNATIONAL!!!

The Next AniJamination Project from ASIFA Central

Never wavering from a challenge, the intrepid membership of ASIFA Central has taken on the upcoming International Day of Animation poster (#18 in a series, collect the set!) as its subject of its next group project. Shy of a dozen participants, some doubling up, some doubling over, all leaning ahead in anticipation of the outcome, the design by Giannis Koutsouris is a mission from the muses. Brad Yarhouse has built a 3D template as the guide for this animated endeavor. Let the caffeine and creative endeavor. Let the caffeine and creative juices flow!



Speaking of which...

About the Poster Designer, Giannis Koutsouris

Robert Swieringa

With eye-popping, swirling color, Giannis Koutsouris's poster for 2019's International Animation Day celebrates the spirit of the unknown, as tubes and spouts from the earth provide for free-flights of our imagination.

As a child, Giannis was intrigued by the wells in the home courtyards, "the holes that derived from the earth's depths," inspiring feelings of awe and questions about the underworld of the earth. With the pumping of water, the many types of extractions we pull from the earth, and the machinery needed for it all, Giannis questioned the survival of the Earth for the future.

Giannis' path to animation, from small village in the countryside to founding (along with Nassos Mirmiridis) *Kounoupi Animation* production company in the 1970s, based in Athens.

At five, he saw the Disney animated film *Peter Pan* and was impressed by the images. Learning that it was made by a series of sketches, he decided to become an animator himself.

His output has included animated commercials, short animated films for festivals, sculpting, and illustrating children's books.

The Earth, with its wells of imagination, the depths of its unknown inspire Giannis. He believes that animation will continue to fascinate audiences, especially with the personal imperfections of traditional techniques creating new aesthetics, meanings, and feelings.

(For more fascinating variations on a theme of entomology, see Giannis' Facebook page - www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011067482742)

Tumo Center for Creative Technology - Armenia Needs Animators!

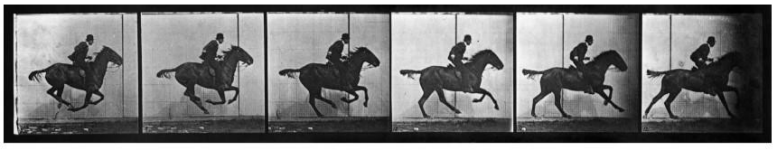
Gary Schwartz wishes to remind all world travelers (or those collecting passport stamps) that the Tumo Center for Creative Technology wants you! Gary wants to jam the country with his friends. If you have two or more weeks to spare, they provide translators and eager students. Bring a caravan to Yerevan! Check out their website for details. (https://tumo.org/en/whatistumo/)

Chuck Wilson - Women in Animation - Pilar Newton-Katz

Chuck's ongoing series of women in animation continues with a profile of Pilar Newton-Katz on his Smudge Animation blog. If you have ever had the pure pleasure of meeting her, you quickly appreciate his comment that *Pilar is one of those bundles of positive energy who seems to be guided by the philosophy that "every stranger is a friend I haven't made yet."* The complete interview, punctuated with generous clips from her animation work, is located at:

http://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com/2019/03/women-of-animated-film-pilar-newton-katz.html

Lest We Forget:



Eadweard Muybridge took the concept of persistence of vision one step further through the photographic process in 1878. He was born in 1830, when Jackson was president, and died in 1904, when Teddy Roosevelt was busting monopolies and pushing for the FDA. He saw a lot in his 74 years, and helped illustrators see a whole lot more. His birthday was April 9.

Larry Cudney Larson (January 24, 1946 - March 22, 2019)

The cold, crisp efficiency of a funeral announcement presents the bare facts that bracket and populate a life - the birth, the jobs, the death, the survivors - and leave it to others to polish the patina for meaning and understanding about what it means to be alive.
Larry Larson, the animator, the musician, the instructor, shared 73 years within this blink of infinity, among so many he guided to see themselves from within, that they may marvel at the hidden spark he recognized in them.
His instruction passed through Detroit's CCS for 15 years, his music through 30 years with the Gaelic League. His silent masses moved frame by frame and populated films of the 1980s.
By the time this appears, his service will have already taken place, but those who crossed his path have been generous with their impressions:

Larry told me once, "Don't forget your love." I was in an intensely dark space when he said that to me quietly at the Gaelic League one night- a moment where he could sense the deep pain I was hiding. It shot a light into my life. Those words gave me something to hold onto in the following year during my most awful days, and I think about those words often. - Sami Kerwin

In our younger days we collaborated on several projects, among them the stop-motion animated films BARRINGTON BUNNY and CAN YOU FEEL THE SPIRIT, a television PSA celebrating Detroit's 275th birthday that featured an animated Spirit of Detroit statue coming to life to help inspire the city's residents. In addition to being a good friend, Larry was a gifted animator and an inspiring teacher. He will be terribly missed by friends, colleagues and current and former students. - Harvey Ovshinsky

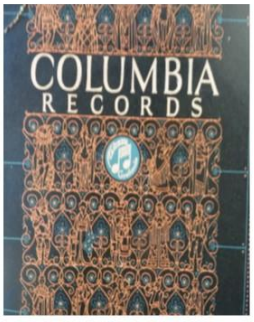
The Motor City music community was rocked by the passing of a real and true legend, Larry Larson. If you've ever been to an Irish pub in Detroit, Dearborn, or elsewhere in town, if you looked up and saw a man smiling in a floppy hat, that was Larry. A more hospitable, more talented man, you'll never meet. - Joe Kidd

2019 - The Year of PUBLIC DOMAIN

Jim Middleton

If the current copyright laws had been in place back in 1928, much of the music behind *Steamboat Willie, Jr.* would likely have been unavailable to a frustrated Walt Disney trying to forge ahead with his first sound Mickey Mouse cartoon. For the past 20 years, access to material that should have entered the public domain has been an equally frustrating challenge. Want to sing a popular torch song from the 1920s? Open your wallet. Want to use a clip from a Chaplin film? Get a lawyer. This year, however, the first copyright thaw began in earnest, and so far, there have not been efforts to squash access by the ubercorp cops.

The magic year is 1923. And next year, the magic year will be 1924. And onwards.
This seems like a big "so what?" to include a bit from "Who's Sorry Now?" in a soundtrack, but you can do it. You can have your characters sing, "Yes! We Have No Bananas!" And next year, you can luxuriate in variations on "Rhapsody in Blue." You're itching to have some of Chaplin's "A Woman of Paris" run in the background of a



period movie theatre? Have at it!
Of course there are caveats. The material is public domain - but the *performance* is not necessarily public domain. That means you can freely copy your personal print of Harold Lloyd in *Safety Last*, but you'd better not use the soundtrack that was added on later.
It does get a bit complicated, but there are resources. Duke University School of Law has created a website with access to a lovely spreadsheet showing what is certainly up for grabs and what is *very likely* up for grabs....
https://law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2019/

So, feeling itchy to edit your own version of the silent DeMille *Ten Commandments*, perhaps with some colorization beyond the two-strip Technicolor pieces? Go to it! And put on a 1923 recording of "Yes! We Have No Bananas" as the Red Sea parts in all its jiggling Jello splendor!

https://publicdomainreview.org/internet-archive/ and http://archive.org - a monster of public domain material, certain to be growing by Douglas Fairbanks-style leaps and bounds. And speaking of Douglas Fairbanks, *Robin Hood* is in the public domain now.

Want to be creative with cylinder recordings? Hit the USCB Cylinder recording archive. Scratchy, sure, but the material 1923 and before are yours. And there is a *lot* of material. Edison and Columbia recorded *everything.*
http://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu

Have a long production schedule? Well, "Someone to Watch Over Me," and "Maybe" from the Gershwin Musical *Oh Kay!* will be available in 2022. Just bide your time...And as far as "Rhapsody in Blue" is concerned, the composition is in the public domain next year, and there was a recorded performance in 1924 as well.

I'll be providing more examples in upcoming newsletters, and our website will have links or mp3 versions of sound clips as time (and, especially, my learning curve) permits.

Deanna Morse Takes Ann Arbor by Storm! Or by YouTube!
"Let's Watch with the Ann Arbor Film Festival" - Deanna gets interviewed about nature! Animals! Animation! Monkey's T-Shirt! The link is at the ASIFA Central FB page, or here it is for linkage fans:
https://youtu.be/BEm-Fy4mLck

Julie Goldstein - Virtual Memory

Julie has been earning kudos! Accolades! Media exposure! Monster hits on YouTube. Better still, *Virtual Memory* is an official selection for the Los Angeles Short Film Festival, Independent Shorts Awards, ***and*** was honored with the Silver Award for Best Director (Female) ***and*** the Bronze Award for Editing. *Virtual Memory* is a multilayered visual survey of what baby boomers certainly feel the 50s and 60s looked like.
As we approach the end of analog television in 2009, and enter a new era in the evolution of digital media, our experience of images and information becomes increasingly intangible. One part history and one part poetry, Virtual Memory is a meditation on the essence of mechanical image-making and its impact on human consciousness, from the physical process of photography and film, to the alternate universe created by computers and virtual reality. Using a compilation of found material, the film bids a kind of fond farewell to the 20th century.
http://julielgoldstein.com

Have ASIFA Central News? Photos? Shameless self promotion? Any recipe that makes cauliflower pizza not taste so cauliflowery? Email jim.middletonrx@gmail.com and he'll make a mess of reporting it. Honest. It's what he does. Till next time!

REMEMBER - SUMMER RETREAT AT WEBSTER UNIVERSITY, St. Louis MO July 20-21, 2019 - Details to follow!!!

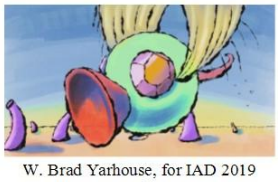
ASIFA Central

Newsletter for Summer, 2019

"Webster U is a great host - film at 11"

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the midwest chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975.
While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is made of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2019 including Ani-Jam's, Bi-monthly get-togethers, and an annual midwest retreat.

R. Brad Yarhouse President ASIFA Central USA


W. Brad Yarhouse, for IAD 2019 Anijam

ASIFA Central Board
(but never bored)

President and IAD World Traveler - *Brad Yarhouse*

Secretary of Confused Distractions and Cracked Fonts - *Jim Middleton*

Coordinator for Membership and Technological Phenomena - *Charles Wilson*

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and Free Range Chickens - *Deanna Morse*

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Ink Tester - *Christopher Sagovac*

Interlocutor of Projects and Public Works - *Gretchen Vinedge*

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando - *Julie Goldstein*

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge - *Steve Leeper*

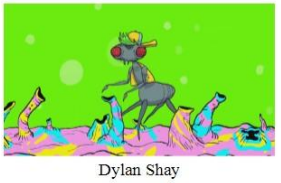
Tallest Human Ever to Animate - *Robert Swieringa*

Stopped Motionator and Tripod Convergence Coordinator - *Gary Schwartz*

Update on the ASIFA Central IAD AniJam!

Andrew Zesiger

Through the spring of this year, ASIFA Central members contributed to a buggy sequential series of clips based on the 2019 IAD poster by graphic artist Giannis Koutsouris, with support from Anastasia Dimitra and *ASIFA Hellas*. Animators included Brad Yarhouse, Jim Middleton, Andrew Zesiger, Dylan Shay, Robert Swieringa, Julie Goldstein, Alexis Kole, Chuck Wilson, and Joshua Harrell. Brad Yarhouse provided the templates for each three-second piece and assembled the whole project, introducing a sound design layered atop a unique rendition of "Flight of the Bumblebee" discovered by Julie Goldstein. The final production incorporated multiple techniques, using antiquated Flash programs and more contemporary 2D and 3D software, stop-motion cutouts, watercolor techniques, and a few well-placed paper cuts.


Dylan Shay

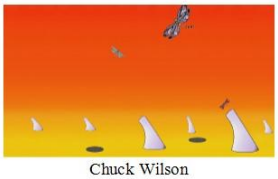
Robert Swieringa

Julie Goldstein

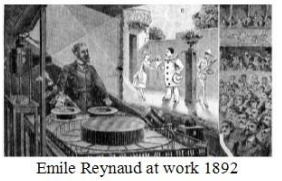
Alexis Kole

Joshua Harrell

(The IAD commemorates the premiere of Emile Reynaud's "Theatre Optique" in Paris, on the 28th of October 1892. His projected hand-drawn image performances predated the filmed "actualities" of the Lumiere brothers by three years.)


Chuck Wilson

For more information on the Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (ASIFA) visit: ASIFA.net


Emile Reynaud at work 1892

Draw on memory, draw on film...draw! Draw! DRAW, dawgunya!

Meet Me In St. Louis, Louie....

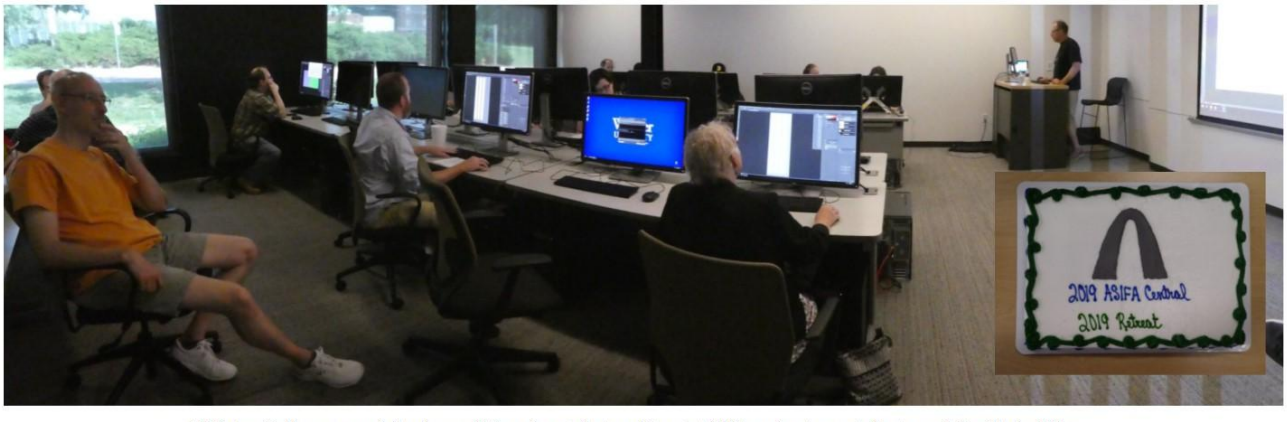
Intrepid - inspired - and with the weather approaching 115 degrees, perhaps somewhat insane! They flew, they drove, they drew, they strove, they sat in the stove of Webster University for a summer retreat, these seekers of techniques, styles, and some non-sticky BBQ and delicious Mexican food.. Because of host with the most Chris Sagovac, the ASIFA cake was not upended, nobody's eyes were put out in the inking of raw celluloid, and everyone did animation yoga with a 7th hour stretch. Steve Leeper conducted two workshops using his abstract film creation techniques in Photoshop. No puppets were harmed in the meat-puppetry exercise, and only one wizard was lost, last seen heading toward Kansas in his hot-air balloon.

Excerpt from the Blog of Sir Charles of Wilson

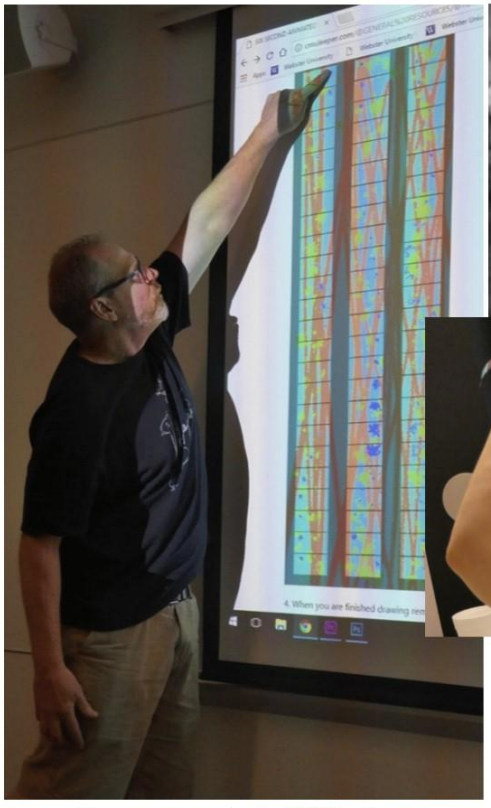
Remembering Suzan Pitt - As you longtime readers of my blog know, every March I post interviews and little tidbits of history about women animators. Well, it pains me to report this, but I have just learned that veteran animator and instructor Suzan Pitt passed away this weekend at her home in New Mexico. For those who are unfamiliar with Suzan's work, I recommend watching the video, 'Persistence of Vision,' created by Blue and Laura Kraning.

Four of Suzan's films can be viewed on the streaming service Fandor via - *https://www.fandor.com/cast_and_crew_members/suzan_pitt.*

The musings of Sir Charles (Chuck) about animation can be reached at - www.smudge.biz - bookmark and reference often!



Webster College opened its air-conditioned portals to midwest ASIFA animators, students, and faculty in July.



Steve removes a smudge the old fashioned way.

Stretch up! Stretch out!

Exercise in animation - literally!

Animation for the Ear
(public domain music series) - with Jim Middleton

A rich musical resource, featuring Leopold Stokowski and his acoustic recordings between 1917 and 1923 (public domain by material, public domain by performance) is available for review and download from:
https://www.stokowski.org/1917-1924_Stokowski_Acoustic_Recordings.htm

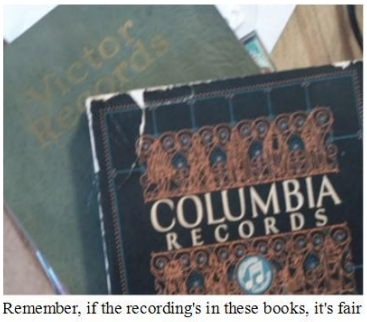
For acoustic performances (recorded through a horn to the wax blank, and not with a microphone), these are quite sophisticated and well engineered. I suspect that the unusual, comparative roundness of the sound from the strings in these selections is due to the large size of the orchestra, with the additional violins working in close synchrony. The engineers were giving it all for their attention as well, squeezing as much as possible onto the 12 inch matrices without sacrificing groove width and flexibility.

On the down side, they are all acoustic, with increased surface noise and muted fidelity.

On the plus side, they're public domain, and of the available examples, are among the best. Using some creativity with filters and speed adjustment, and you have some impressive sound beds. The selections come as mp3s, along with the date of recording, just to smear the info into the faces of youtube or FB monitors.

I have many of these 78s in my shellac-and-wax-based archive, but these already-converted recordings are a remarkable collection of some very familiar selections waiting to join your digital library. Through 1923, they include some familiar selections:

Hungarian Dances #1,5, 6, Brahms
Dance of the Blessed Spirits, from Orpheus and Eurydice, Gluck
Anitra's Dance from Peer Gynt, Greig
Midsummer Night's Dream, Scherzo, Mendelssohn
Symphony #40, 3rd movement, Mozart
Carmen, Prelude to Act 1, Changing of the Guard, The Smugglers, Bizet
Blue Danube Waltz, Strauss
Hungarian Rhapsody #2, Liszt
Largo from the New World Symphony, Dvorak
Finlandia, Sibelius
Faust, Waltz from Act II, Gounod
Dance of the Tumblers, Rimsky-Korsakov



Remember, if the recording's in these books, it's fair game!

Next year, when 1924 opens its public domain vaults, Rachmaninoff's *Piano concerto #2*, performed by Rachmaninoff, is at your service. Like the acoustic version of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (which is another 1924 release), this first recording provides what some (including your humble typist) consider the better piano performance of the piece.

The website is of the nice, old fashioned html variety, and the links were all still connecting to mp3 versions of these recordings as of 30 July 2019. I had no problem downloading the files for my thumb drive (*formerly called*, according to my students, as a "memory stick") of road tripping material. The site also has in-depth information on early recordings, the evolution of Stokowski's style, and his influence throughout the acoustic and early electric era of recorded sound. Someone spent hundreds of hours putting this all together, and you can easily spend a couple of hours here, too.

Jim Middleton, for IAD 2019 Anijam

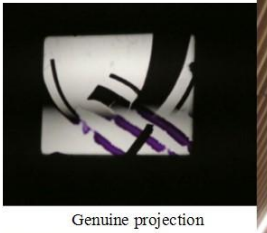
Deanna Morse Reports....We Have Jewel-Worthy ANNIVERSARIES

"And back to you, Jimbie!"

2020 is ASIFA's 60th Anniversary
2020 is also the 60th anniversary of the Annecy International Animation Festival, *and*
2020 will be the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations
ASIFA/Central, founded in 1975, will be 45 years old next year!!! Wow! We persist!
The 45th is *Sapphire*, the 60th and 75th *are both Diamonds!*

And More Rare Photos from St. Louis! *Because We CAN!*

Chris Sagovac and his magic Dr. Ph. Martin's Bombay India Ink (now available without a presription) along with his audio-visual mastery of 16mm brought him into the out-of-body, 11th hour experience, of electron-free projection. True prestiDIGITATION!



Genuine projection

PFAS free!

Dazzling photography by *Gary Schwartz*

So shy...

"WE went to be WEBSTER UNIVERSITY students!"

Mike Long and Chris Aaron, also hidden among the smiling faces at the retreat above, were deeply involved in sending the event at Webster University to lofty heights heretofore unknown by mere mortals. Clear 16mm stock available at https://www.christys.net/film-editing-supplies

ASIFA Central Summer Newsletter (cc) September 2019
As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com ... This is a Summer 2019 bit of printage, even if it's at the end of it. The next issue will include prattle and pix about IAD, Retreats in Grand Rapids, and the OLAF. Stay Tooned!

ASIFA Central

Newsletter for Winter, 2019-2020

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the midwest chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is made of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2020 including Ani-Jam's, Bi-monthly get-togethers, and an annual midwest retreat.

Now THAT's What I Call a MESSAGE!
A Few Words from R. Brad Yarhouse, ASIFA Central President

Dear ASIFA friends,

"I will never reveal the contents of my travel mug."

As I am thinking forward to next year, I want to let you know some of the great events and activities that your membership contribution provides for central U.S. chapter and ASIFA international. We are a volunteer run, 501c3 non-profit that supports the midwest of the United States with the goal to help promote progress towards peace and mutual understanding between all people as part of the *Association Internationale du Film d'Animation*. This coming year marks the 60th anniversary of our international UNESCO chartered organization!

This past year, members had the opportunity to animate in an internationally shown ***ANI-JAM***, submit their films for showing around the world, make films together, explore techniques, and deliver papers at our annual retreat at Webster University in St. Louis. Our members organized and showed animation as part of *Site Lab* event in Grand Rapids, MI called ***Project 1***. ASIFA partnered with the *Thriller Chiller Film Festival* to show *Evil Dead* with guest animator/effects guru ***Tom Sullivan***. We celebrated ***International Animation Day*** this year with animation showings in Grand Rapids, Detroit, and St. Louis! Our chapter also launched a newly redesigned web site.

Our chapter is in the planning stages for doing a series of workshops, along with member meet and greet animation showings. Plans are already underway for our 2020 retreat —which will be announced soon *(spoiler alert - think MOTOWN)*. There are many international plans in the works for the 60th anniversary of ASIFA, including the creation of a short film to represent our Central chapter in a special celebration for International Animation Day. It will be shown with other short films around the world! We even kicked off the new year with a fun Christmas Card animation party on January 3rd in Grand Rapids, MI.

My goal as president is to find ways to collaborate and spread the opportunities around our region. I would love to hear your ideas on how we can make ASIFA Central connect with you and your area of the great midwest. Please note that your membership or end of year donation is potentially a tax deductable contribution to our 501c3 depending on your local state laws.

The Best Wishes in 2020!
– Brad

ASIFA Central Board
(but never bored)

President and IAD Multiverse Traveler
Brad Yarhouse

Secretary of Unfocused Distractions and Cracked Fonts
Jim Middleton

Coordinator for Membership and Technological Phenomena
Charles Wilson

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and Free Range Chickens
Deanna Morse

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Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge
Steve Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Robert Swieringa

Stopped Motionator and Tripod Convergence Coordinator
Gary Schwartz

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JULY 18-19! THE ASIFA CENTRAL SUMMER RETREAT WILL TAKE PLACE IN DETROIT!! DETAILS SOON!

Tom Sullivan in Thriller! Chiller!

The Thriller! Chiller! Film Festival has been an October Grand Rapids staple since 2006, presenting films and discussions ranging from classic horror to skewed animation. This year, ASIFA Central was able to sponsor the participation of Michigan animator and special effects artist, Tom Sullivan, just in time for the presentation of a 4K restoration of the 16mm classic, *Evil Dead*. Tom Sullivan created the effects and new uses for oatmeal while animating the deliciously gooey experience, while the unpadded pacing of director Sam Raimi made the film feel fresh even as it approached its 40th birthday.

Tom Sullivan describes the best formula for fake blood - It's delicious!

Tom was a ubiquitous presence at the Wealthy theater the entire evening of October 12, before, after, and during the film, discussing pre-computer techniques and the challenges of producing a masterpiece on a shoestring budget. Tom has always been generous with his time to local schools and community colleges, adding insight to film production and championing the creative spirit.

Julie Goldstein and *Allegro non Troppo* - at the Muskegon Block Film Festival (press release)

Directed by Bruno Bozzetto, this film is a "gorgeous send-up of *Fantasia* " with a sly sense of humor. It features six animated shorts synchronized with six iconic classical music works, including Debussy's *Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun,* Ravel's *Bolero,* and music by Tchaikovsky, Dvórak, Sibelius, Stravinsky, and Vivaldi. In between each short are vignettes featuring a sleazy promoter, a bully conductor, a harried animator, and an all-female geriatric orchestra. The panelists for discussion were Andy Buelow, Executive Director of West Michigan Symphony; and Julie Goldstein, Assistant Professor and Animation Emphasis Coordinator, GVSU Film & Video Production. (And ASIFA Central member with the BEST BASEMENT!)

A discarded Coke bottle creates an evolutionary march to Ravel's *Bolero* in *Allegro non Troppo* (1977)

"It was so wonderful to have the opportunity to be interviewed on our local NPR station!' said Julie. "We talk about *Movies and Music at the Block* in Muskegon, and *Allegro non Troppo* was the first film to be shown that Wednesday night."

Craving more? Julie Goldstein, and West Michigan Symphony's Andy Beulow discuss the Italian film *Allegro non Troppo*." in this bit of creative pod castery: https://cpa.ds.npr.org/.../audio/2020/01/the_block_1-13-20.mp3

(By the way, a typist's note here - if you aren't crying after the cat's performance from "Valse Triste," you have no soul.)

OIAF *- Ottawa International Animation Festival - the reason Septembers were invented (September 24-29, 2019, anyway)*

Photo by Gary Schwartz

There is an ebb and flow to the animation industry. In the early 1980s, it wasn't a hot commodity to be an animator, and festivals were gatherings to swap stories about grant restrictions, doing more with less, and fretting about the projectionist scratching your only 16mm sound print. Then the success of *Roger Rabbit* and *The Little Mermaid* made animators and animation interesting (*i.e., monster profitable*), and festivals were jammed to see the latest innovation from Pixar and party with June Foray. Then *Home on the Range* and similar production saturations re-created discussions about budget restrictions, closed studios, layoffs, and worries that your codec wouldn't be compatible.

The past ten years have brought back the enthusiasm, and the OIAF experience is again a blend of electron-free styles, minimalist performances with agility trumping technology, and the sense that animation is, after all, a poetic means of self expression – and that there is no "right way" besides just diving in and doing it, with technology actually being helpful at times.

ASIFA Central member Charles Wilson, in his extensive Smudge Animation blog, http://smudge.biz has documented experiences attending the OIAF and other festivals, and also provides survival tips on attending a festival. His insights on that process alone are priceless. *(Major hint - if you can, get a suite with a washer/dryer included - you'll be able to pack like a pro, AND you'll save time by not worrying about whether it's you or the touching film on screen bringing tears to the eyes of the audience. Bring along some detergent pods and you'll save even more time trekking around town. See the sights, not a dollar store)*

Because you can never get enough Canadian sodium...

Feature upon feature, short upon short, technique upon technique... and behind the scenes panel discussions from Disney, a pumpkin-slaughter fest at the picnic, and poutine. Canadian poutine. Canadian poutine and a Guinness. A Guinness record for Canadian poutine. You can get poutine in Ottawa at 4am. An evening of animation, a Guinness and poutine at 4am, followed by some ketchup potato chips. Save the digestives for the next morning (another survival tip). Don't tip the Canadian customs guards, and don't bring back more than 100ml of maple syrup. There are limits even to Canadian manners.

Random Acts of Photography - OIAF, September 2019

images courtesy of Gary Schwartz, inveterate shutterbug, and Jim Middleton, blurred by reality

Explanation of mysteries - clockwise - Chris Robinson providing cheesecake while in repose, the need for a civilization in North America, a bird giving the audience a Chris, Ottawa's sister city in the fifth dimension (mayor Mxyzptlk), Steve Stanchfield recruiting future archivists, Thomas Renoldner accepting a Major Award -The Nelvana Grand Prize for Independent Short Animation for Don't Know What; proof that you need some stinkin' badges, Lizzy Hobbs and her signal film introduction for the festival, Kathy Rose creating magic with a sheet, projector, and amazing flexibility; and a tour bicycle with certain limitations, but with a fantastic clakkety clakkety clack sound as you ride down Rideau Street. In the center is why your humble typist did not have pumpkin pie this past Thanksgiving. A final note before being distracted by all that poutine again - the 2019 festival was channeling a lot of 1980s memories, notably with the recurrence of early computer animation styles and video games - the trend continues with finding nostalgia for Whatever Was Big 40 years earlier. Apparently we sometimes miss a time without cell phones or the internet. Hmmm.....

ASIFA International Update with Deanna Morse, Vice President, ASIFA *International* - Contact: morsed@gvsu.edu

It's already 2020, and this marks the 60th Anniversary of our international organization, ASIFA.

As you probably know, ASIFA was founded at the Annecy Animation Festival, by several important animators of the time, including Norman McLaren (who was elected as the first President) and John Halas (elected as the second President). The organization was chartered under UNESCO, with the basic goals of furthering the art of animation, fostering international communication through the art of animation, and supporting world peace.

There are a number of proposed activities … We will definitely mark this birthday at several important international festivals. There is discussion of compiling curated animation reels that represent the themes and change of animation over the decades. A few folks are researching stickers, commemorative pins and other swag options. And, as you know, IAD is mounting a special animation challenge, creating films that express our individual cultural identities. Hats off to our President and IAD Coordinator Brad Yarhouse.

ASIFA International currently has more than 30 chapters, and also has individual members from countries where there is not a critical mass of animators in one region.

Almost all the chapters are volunteer run, although some have offices and staff.

We actually have a financial reserve that we are looking to invest in activities during this next few years. If you have ideas for projects that would benefit our international organization, please let me know.

And, if you are interested in being part of the volunteer team, please let me know and I will put you in touch with Anastasia Dimitra (Hellas, formerly Greece), the 60th Anniversary coordinator.

Happy Anniversary to us!

2019 Central Retreat in St. Louis, MO

A Reboot of Grotesqueries - Steve Stanchfield and Thunderbean Animation

Steve Stanchfield, with his unending quest for obscure and historic images, works on existing projects when not battling the labyrinthine Minotaur of Felix the Cat copyrights (whose 100th birthday should have been cause for greater celebration at Universal, but that's another *tail*). The fun Halloween compilation entitled *Grotesqueries* has been reworked into Blu-ray format with some added features. If you haven't already worn out your previous DVD version, it remains a whimsical delight, and it's time to upgrade!

Project-1/ASIFA Central Installation at Tanglefoot

The rebranded Grand Rapids ArtPrize afforded some timesharing between Julie Goldstein and ASIFA Central the weekend before Halloween, and the temperature was - well, let's just remember it was Michigan, after all. Nevertheless, a handful of members inhabited the frosty digs of the old Tanglefoot flypaper factory building on Grand Rapids' south side. Gretchen Vinnedge set up a Dragonframe station, Brad Yarhouse ran films to test for IAD, and Julie Goldstein presented examples of her innovations and abstractions amid an overview of historic animation. After an hour or so, representatives from Project-1 came in and closed a large delivery door, wondering how we were managing with that level of Michigan fresh air. Flypaper chemicals, Michigan frostiness - but these are ANIMATORS! Pain is a foreign concept to them. Next year - stop motion ice sculptures (they may be self-portraits!).

IAD Showings -Grand Rapids

Art everywhere at the Fed Gallery

Brad Yarhouse, already serving as curator for the international day films, also arranged the venue at Kendall College's Fed Galleries for an evening of International ASIFA films interspersed with a Swiss compilation animation. The Swiss films were linked by an overall theme of a surprise birthday party. A *meta moment* in one of the Swiss films: one neolithic creature chasing another gets a phone call and has to ring off because "I'm in the middle of an animation." Anything can happen in a cartoon, including the unexpected aggression of a machine-gun mamma of animal super heroes.

Over 40 attendees experienced IAD at the Fed Gallery, with ASIFA Central's *Anijam 19* and Gary Schwartz's *Spencer's Slightly Imperfect Peep Show* introducing the evening. Chris Sullivan's *Orbit of Minor Satellites,* Steve Leeper's production *Fireflower,* and Deanna Morse's *The Gift* added to ASIFA Central's contribution. The creator of the 2019 IAD poster, Giannis Koutsouris, was given a spotlight with one of his early 16mm works, *Line,* a European parable of fighting oppression.

NEWSFLASH!!!

"The Ann Arbor Film Festival team is pleased to announce that Gary Schwartz's film, SPENCER'S SLIGHT IMPERFECT PEEP SHOW A.K.A. MICRO-BURLESQUE, has been selected for this year's 58th AAFF, held March 24-29, 2020."

The Reason is Just a Subterfuge - Julie Goldstein has a BASEMENT

OK, Deanna came back to Michigan in November - so LET'S PARTY! We brought toys! We brought film prints! We brought nachos! We drank coffee and carbonated beverages *with various levels of physiological impact.* We fretted over budgets! We got lost amid the one-way streets of eastern Grand Rapids! And we watched cartoons! But most importantly, we left a trail of breadcrumbs to come back in January AND DO IT ALL AGAIN. Welcome 2020 - you don't know what is about to hit you!

Upcoming Adjustments to the Chapter's By-Laws

Every few years, the ASIFA Central board reviews its organizational by-laws and looks to make adjustments reflecting the needs and involvement of its members. 2020 is going to be one of those years. Members will be getting updates on proposed adjustments, amendments, and changes in the chapter by-laws as the board's ongoing meetings progress. Mail and electronic announcements will soon populate your inboxes!

Raymond Scott Puts Up His Hair - discovery in audio

Raymond Scott's works are very familiar to fans of Warner Brothers animation - his compositions were arranged by Carl Stalling and punctuate nearly every move in a typical Roadrunner cartoon, among many others. He was amazingly popular with his atypical rhythms and audio experiments, right in the middle of the great Depression, and influenced a lot of musicians with his style and multilayered melodies.

So this portion of my column isn't really a public domain issue, as the material is more a mid-century vintage, but a small album entitled, *Raymond Scott and His Orchestra play...,* appeared among some 10 inch LPs. I was expecting, well, a *Twilight in Turkey* or *Devil Drums* adventure. Um, not so much...

It made me recall an interview with Frank Zappa where he said he was pleased to create arrangements for his compositions that would wedge nicely into an elevator or dental experience. This early LP of Raymond Scott performing "for your listening and dancing pleasure" comes as a similar aural shock, especially from the man who brought us *Powerhouse* and *Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals*. He does get to include two of his own compositions (*Huckleberry Duck* and *Coming Down to Earth*), but each euphonic arrangement could have been comfortably performed by the Glenn Miller or Benny Goodman bands. I suspect he was bankrolling some of his Clavivox experiments, or just making use of his experience conducting for the "Your Hit Parade" orchestra. It was a pleasant discovery.

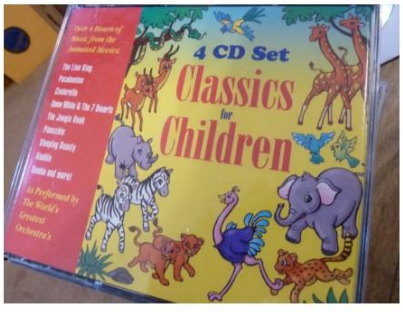
Animation for the Ear (public domain music discussion series) - with Jim Middleton

First of all, what does *public domain* look like, if you are dealing with early recorded material? In 2019, the magic year for PD was 1923. This year, it's .... do the math.... wait for it.... *1924.*

It can be a bit tricky to identify a year, since early 78rpms were cluttered with patent dates and no indication of when things were recorded. However, Columbia recordings provide certain visual signals to their age. It appears that in 1917, their studios were working overtime to fill dealer shelves with classical selections. So if you see a record with the "banner label" on your right, you're looking at material from 1917 to 1922. These are acoustic recordings, so that means the fidelity is a bit "soft" (ok, absolutely archaic), but they can serve as a basis for projects - or "background" sounds.

For 1923 to 1925, Columbia used this "flag label" on the left for their recordings. Again, these are all acoustic, as the company was preparing to switch to its electric systems in 1925 under a new "Viva-Tonal" label. That material will have to wait for public domain status, but it's coming quickly....until then, thrill with the notion of *Rhapsody in Blue* being public domain.

The other thing I have noticed is the challenge in tracking down copyright pathways or possible bootlegged material, and whether such can still serve a purpose. What can be the value of public domain material performed in anonymity, sandwiched between material where licenses to perform have apparently never been procured?



Over 20 years ago, I found a four-CD set entitled *Classics for Children*, featuring music "As Performed By The World's Greatest Orchestr***a's***" (sic). The (sic) was my first red flag. The listing of selections was my second - *The Lion King, Pocahontas, Cinderella, Pinocchio, Aladdin* were among the cover listings. The images on the cover were generic, cartoony animals, with no artist identification.

It had no booklet, no "listing of Orchestras, Soloists, and Conductors" as promised on the backside. But most tellingly, *it had no mention anywhere of Disney or any licensing agreement with the Disney company*. My third red flag.

The "suites" on each CD are certainly Disney material - *The Lion King Symphonic Suite, Beauty and the Beast Symphonic Suite*, all broken into sub-category descriptions of the songs included - *The Circle of Life, Whistle While You Work*, and so on.

After each "suite" are some standard public domain musical pieces - *William Tell Overture, Nutcracker Suite, Swan Lake, In the Hall of the Mountain King*. Nicely performed, but again, no credit to an orchestra, soloist, or conductor. And there was still that troubling apostrophe "s" on the cover for a plural of orchestra.

The discs themselves were colorfully produced and the sound balanced, but no credit to composers or mention of Disney.

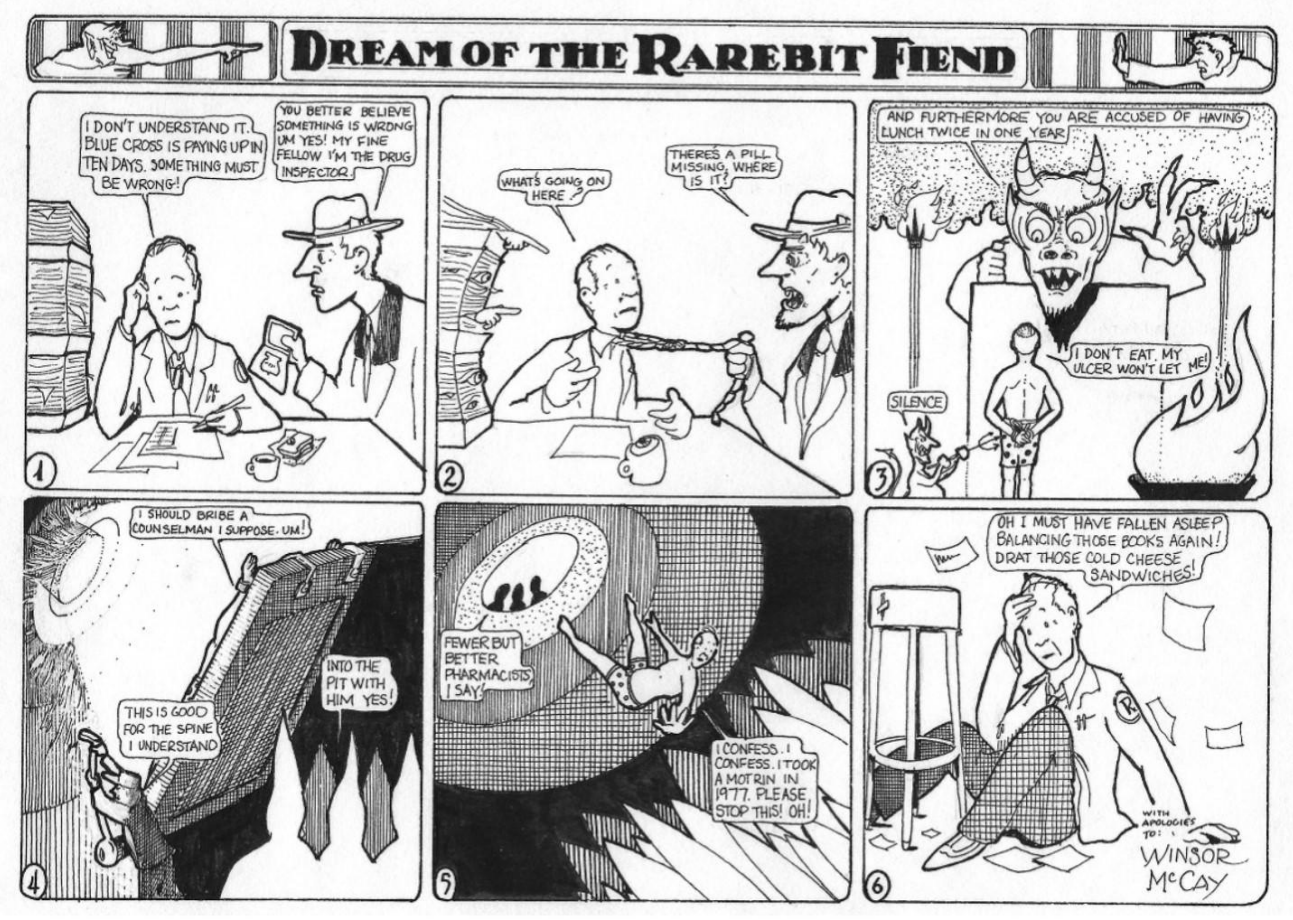
There were some names mentioned on the back of the box - GSC Music, Michele Audio Corporation, Entertainment Distributing, and Jerry Ward Design. The latter two mentioned Oregon as an apparent home base. It was even assigned a catalogue number - 15245. EDI claimed © of 1996, and Michele Audio Corporation claimed a (P) of 1996.

And, so, the exploration began. Twenty three years had passed since these discs were issued, on the edge of the internet explosion. What sort of online footprint could be found?

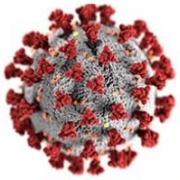
To sum it up, extremely little about any of the parties could be uncovered. The image above is the Google location for an empty building representing the only physical address for any of the sites, and it isn't in Oregon.

Ultimately, I'm not really interested in getting access to Disney rights to their music - far from it. If, however, it can be determined that these performances of public domain symphonic pieces has been gleaned from Indian, Chinese, or Korean orchestras (none are named) or from areas that don't share copyright concerns with the rest of the planet, well, that's one nice piece from *Swan Lake* I'd love to use...

Stay tuned!



ASIFA Central



Newsletter for Springtime 2020

ASIFA АСИФА

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is a blend of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2020 including Ani-Jam's, Bi-monthly get-togethers, and an annual retreat, set to be a virtual event in 2020!

ASIFA Central Board
(but never bored)

President and IAD Multiverse Traveler
Brad Yarhouse

Secretary of Unfocused Distractions and Cracked Fonts
Jim Middleton

Coordinator for Membership and Technological Phenomena
Charles Wilson

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and Free Range Chickens
Deanna Morse

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Ink Tester
Christopher Sagovac

Interlocutor of Projects and Public Works
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando ***WITH AN AMAZING BASEMENT***
Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge
Steve Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Robert Swieringa

Stopped Motionator and Tripod Convergence Coordinator
Gary Schwartz

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR JULY 18-19! THE ASIFA CENTRAL SUMMER RETREAT WILL TAKE PLACE ON A COMPUTER NEAR YOU! Details Soon!

While the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit had generously opened its gates to the flood of animation enthusiasts for this summer's retreat, the CoVid pandemic had other plans. Charging into a retreat had a rather antithetical sound in this environment anyway, if one were to impose a collegiate spin to the concept...but the digressions continue from this keyboard.

As a result, many other gatherings have already been presented by video conferencing (ie, the recent Ann Arbor Film Festival) this year, and many others have begun to make the conversion or have flat-out cancelled long-standing conferences and festivals.

There *will* be an ASIFA Central retreat in July - the board met at the end of April to brainstorm options and will be presenting its reorganized concepts soon. Technological options will help unite our diffuse membership for a truly unique experience.

Upcoming Adjustments to the Chapter's By-Laws

And not only that, but we need to conduct elections! Here is the latest word from our Membership Coordinator and Technological Phenomenon, Charles Wilson:

As we of the ASIFA Central board were reviewing our membership numbers last year and looking back to when we last held elections for officer positions, we noticed two things. The first was that there was a lot of time passing between our holding elections for officers, even though our charter specifies that we should be electing new officers every year. The second is that our charter is not in line with that of ASIFA International, whose officers are elected for three year terms. Now, while ASIFA chapters are afforded certain measure of autonomy, when we discussed the issue in light of the fact that we now have a number of members who are eligible for running for office, we made the decision to ***a)*** *hold an election in 2020, and b) modify our charter so as to bring it in line with ASIFA International such that our elected officers will now be elected for a three-year term.*

Another reason we'd like to do this is so that the officers will have the opportunity to do more long-term strategic planning, which we believe will better serve our membership. And since we're pretty much doing this already due to the fact that up until recently we didn't have enough members eligible to become officers, the changeover is going to be relatively unnoticable to our membership.

However, in the spirit of full transparency, we wanted to bring this change to you, our members, and open the matter up for dialogue. In the upcoming months, we would like to hear from all of you what your thoughts are so we can make a decision that best fits our membership.

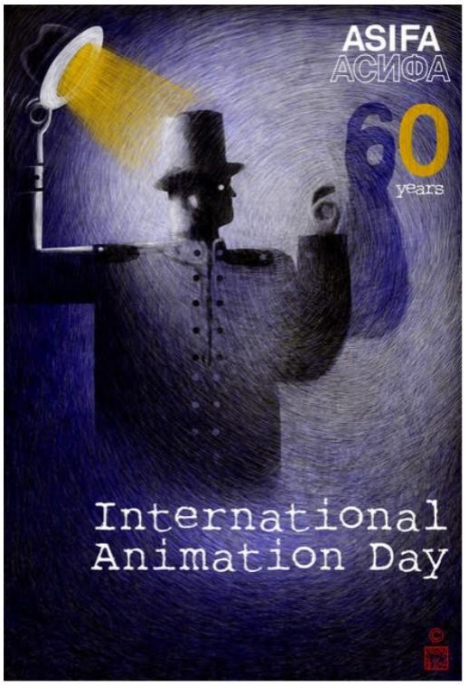
And for those of you who have been a member of ASIFA Central for at least one-year, you are eligible to run for an officer's position on the board. If you're interested, please download and read the ASIFA Central charter and reach out to us before the upcoming elections this Fall so that you can be listed on the ballot.

We will be discussing this matter further at our upcoming MidWest Animators Retreat, so stay tuned for more information.

International Animation Day Update - October 28, 2020

The international ASIFA animation challenge accompanying IAD will involve up to 15 ASIFA chapters, each contributing two minutes of animation to introduce and promote this year's IAD festivities. The collective films will become part of *Spiritus Mundi: Animating the World,* a title inspired by Irish poet W. B. Yeats .
Each ASIFA chapter will create a piece representative of its region. The theme chosen by ASIFA Central is the "Moveable Feast," with ten contributors thus far signing on. One large table with a collection of dishes will ultimately represent the central US life and lifestyles, through use of literal or metaphorical sounds and visuals.
Coordination of the films celebrating IAD will become another online transition, with details being finalized. The current deadline for film submissions is July 1, 2020.
Since the project aligns with the 60th anniversary of ASIFA, that theme will also be woven into the production.
And speaking of ASIFA and it's anniversary –

The Illuminating Light from Regina Pessoa *by Bob Swieringa*



Emitting from a magical hat, the light of animation illuminates the world, celebrating International Animation Day 2020 and the 60th anniversary of ASIFA. The hat is held aloft by Abi Feijó, creator of International Animation Day and former president of ASIFA. With this image, Regina Pessoa's IAD poster draws our attention to the magic and history of animation.
Regina gets her visual inspiration from painting (which she studied before encountering animation), alternative comic books, and literature.
"I was fascinated by the possibility of adding movement to the rich visuals and textures that I was developing in painting," to blend with the arts of cinema language, sound, music, and writing. In her films she thus turned to her lived experiences or to common themes that can be universally recognized (being young, being afraid of the dark), but from her unique perspective. "I continue to explore that path, taking inspiration from my own childhood and the people around me," such as her eccentric *Tio Tomás*, whose hat Abi holds.
The poster references histories that are personal and those that may be familiar but remain in danger of fading. "I think that more than ever it is necessary to teach the history of art and animation to young generations… What paper and pencil are and the power they represent… that an abstract concept existing only in the mind/idea/imagination might be physically and materially materialized through that perfect communication/connection and domain between brain and hand/body." For Regina, the short animated film is a "precious kind of laboratory" in which boundaries of technique, narrative, and content are explored.
Highlighting this play of light and shadow, the poster encapsulates the wish expressed by Regina, "that animation can be recognized and respected by the general public as the great art form that in fact it is."

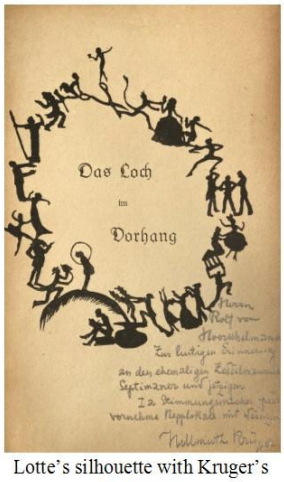
Cover for *Das Loch im Vorhang*

Adventures in (Armchair) Historical Research *by Charles Wilson*

One of the direct benefits of the Internet is the ability for researchers like myself to track down rare material in other countries. Not only is there a plethora of films from other countries being uploaded to sites like *YouTube* and *Vimeo*, but sites like Google Translate lower the communication barrier with their tools for translating foreign languages and in some cases, the ability to translate entire websites into English on the fly.
An example occurred earlier this year, when I was looking through my collection of works that involved Lotte Reiniger. Among the books I've located in the past were an original German copy of *Venus in Seide* , which featured Lotte's silhouette illustrations, or an old library copy of *Walking Shadows* from a bookseller in England -- *Walking Shadows* being a hardback essay written about

Lotte by Eric Walter White, one of her former assistants. This essay is particularly interesting as it gives details into Lotte's animation process – along with a few plates with images of models that she created but never used in her films.

Well, while I was looking at the short list of publications that Lotte directly worked with, one that has eluded me for years piqued my interest. A quick visit to the normal sites that sold international books, such as Abe Books or the German antiquarian who sold me *Venus in Seide*, proved fruitless. Then, for some reason, I decided to switch gears. A quick search on the German-language version of Amazon.com, and there it was: a copy of Helmuth Krüger's *Das Loch Im Vorhang* (English translation: *The Hole in the Curtain*). It's the only other book, that I am aware of, for which Lotte created silhouette illustrations (there may be more, I'm just not aware of any other than the aforementioned two). However, purchasing from Amazon.de proved fruitless. Google Translate wouldn't work on the Amazon website, and I couldn't figure out how to *a)* select international shipping or *b)* ask the bookseller if they even would ship to America.



Lotte's silhouette with Kruger's dedication

After thinking about it for a day, I went back to Amazon and puzzled out the bookseller's name then tracked down their website. Lo and behold, there it was, listed on their website. And while struggling to figure out the German website, I made the welcome discovery that their shopping cart *had an English-language feature.*

A month later, I had a very weathered copy of this book from 1922 sitting on my desk, and a smile across my face as I tried to translate the handwritten dedication that the author -- Helmuth Krüger -- had written to someone named Rolf.

'Sumurûn' illustration on page 89

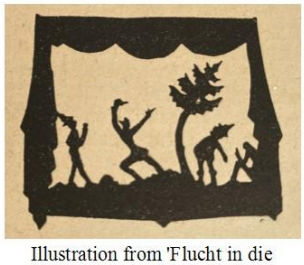
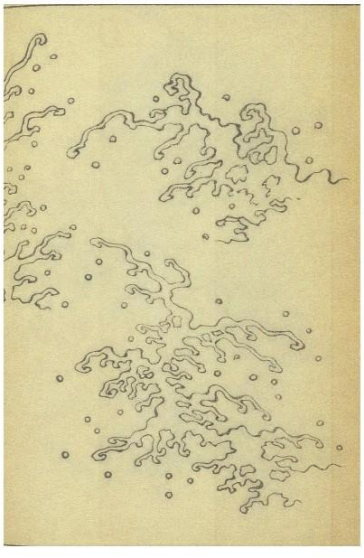


Illustration from 'Flucht in die Rulissen' English translation: 'Escape to the backdrop'

The images included in this article are taken of Lotte's silhouette illustrations to give readers an idea of how detailed her work was back then. For those interested in looking at all the illustrations in this book, a copy of *Das Loch im Vorhang* was scanned and posted on the Deutsche National Bibliothek website, which is accessible at the following link: https://portal.dnb.de/bookviewer/view/1128443937 .

Ain't modern life grand?

Public Domain Feast for the Eyes, or "A Wave Merely Returns to the Water"

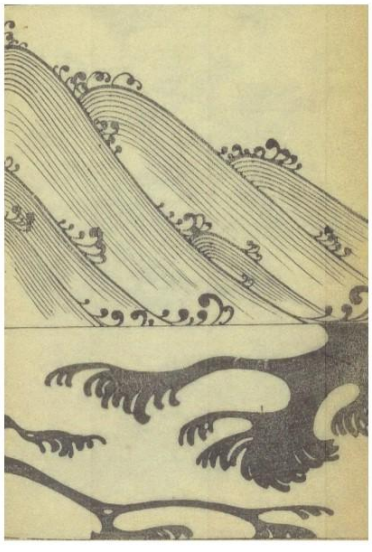


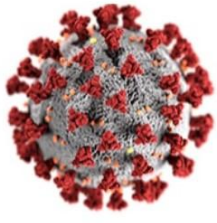
The stunning 1903, two-volume wood block book on wave designs, *Hamonshu,* is now available online.

Examples bracket the page, and the overall, the images range from baroque to surreal, to art nouveau. Each page is a visual treat.

The pdf can be downloaded through the *Public Domain Review* site at:

https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/hamonshu-a-japanese-book-of-wave-and-ripple-designs-1903





Fun Philately and Forbidden Films - The Song of the South - *by Jim Middleton*

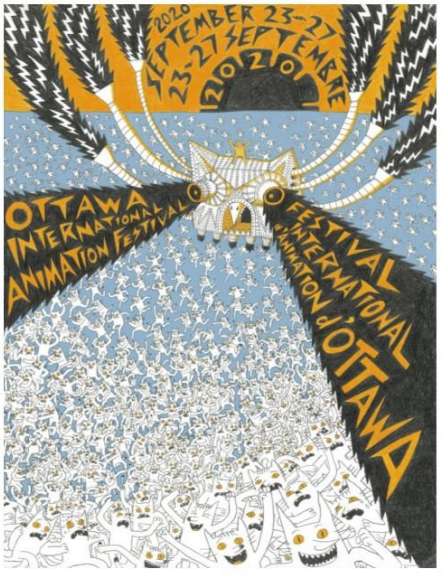
Disney did have a special release *Song of the South!* - on postage stamps, that is, and only for the Turks and Caicos Islands, and *that* was in 1981. According to the internet, and we know that is never worng, "Turks and Caicos is an archipelago of 40 low-lying coral islands in the Atlantic Ocean, a British Overseas Territory southeast of the Bahamas."
While generally unavailable today, and thought to be unseen for generations, *Song of the South* has been re-released to theaters several times after its original premiere, often to coincide with milestones in its own, or corporate, history: in 1956 for its 10th anniversary, in 1972 for the 50th anniversary of Walt Disney Productions, in 1973 as the second half of a double bill with *The Aristocats* (twice in two years, and *that* split billing?), in 1980 for the 100th anniversary of Harris's Uncle Remus stories, and in 1986 for the film's own 40th anniversary – *and* as promotion for the *Splash Mountain attraction* at Disney theme parks.
It is interesting that you can *experience* a portion of the film, *hear* music and observe references to the film, but not really *see* the film any more. In the meantime, the entire, uncut *Song of the South* has been broadcast on European and Asian television networks (and is likely the source for any circulating video material these days in the US. The first print of it I ever saw on blurry VHS video came with Japanese subtitles).
It was between the 1980 and the 1986 releases that these stamps were licensed and printed.
See the Jim Korkis book, **Who's Afraid of *The Song of the South*** for details on the film you will never see on *Disney +*.

Deanna Morse and Organic Art with Kaylee

The CoVid lock down has not really been all that dreadful for animators and artists - in fact, animation studios are *actually hiring*. To keep the crop of artists ever growing, Deanna Morse, safe in her Oregon compound, has enlisted neighbor and niece Kaylee in the creation of budding art with regional wildflowers and paper plates. *Kids, by all means, try this at home!*

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.
- W. B. Yeats

Festivals Continue to Move Online, Cancelling Face-to-Face Gatherings



Annecy's 2020 festival has made its move online official, according to a report from April 15. Details and jury selections are to be revealed by mid-May.

The biennial Hiroshima international animation festival (August 20-24) has opted not to hold a physical event for its 18th festival. Nonetheless, film selection will begin May 1, and the competition selections will be revealed before the start of June. Award winners will be announced at the end of August.

The Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF) is also transforming itself into a likely online experience. Their official release states it "will happen in September. It might not look like it usually does, but maybe it will. No matter what happens, the OIAF will go forward. You can bet you'll see a lot of familiar OIAF programs and opportunities in one form or another."

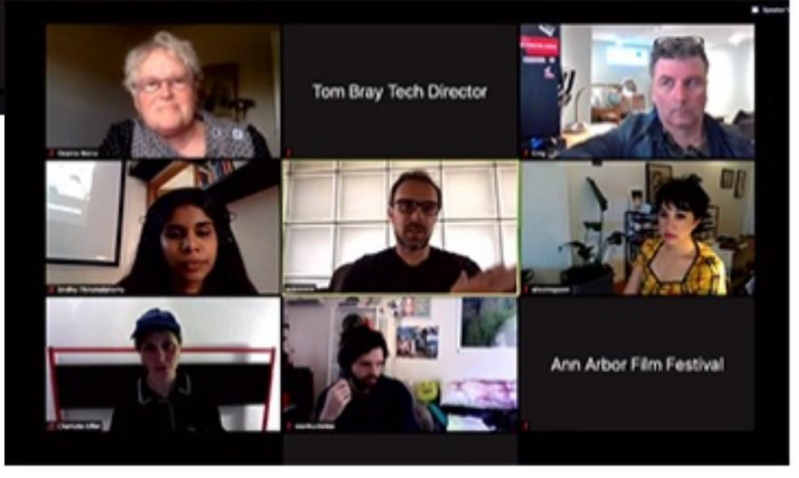
The list of changes will continue to grow. If you have a film in competition, be sure to get the latest news from the specific festival website.

Zoom Becomes Our Rotogravure

With the need for online meetings, we're getting pretty savvy with our Zoom experiences. It all began with the Ann Arbor Film Festival and Gary Schwartz and Deanna Morse adapting like bosses...

Gary Schwartz rules and schools at the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Deanna Morse keeps the conversation alive with sprightly! insightful! illuminating! observations, probing questions, also during the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

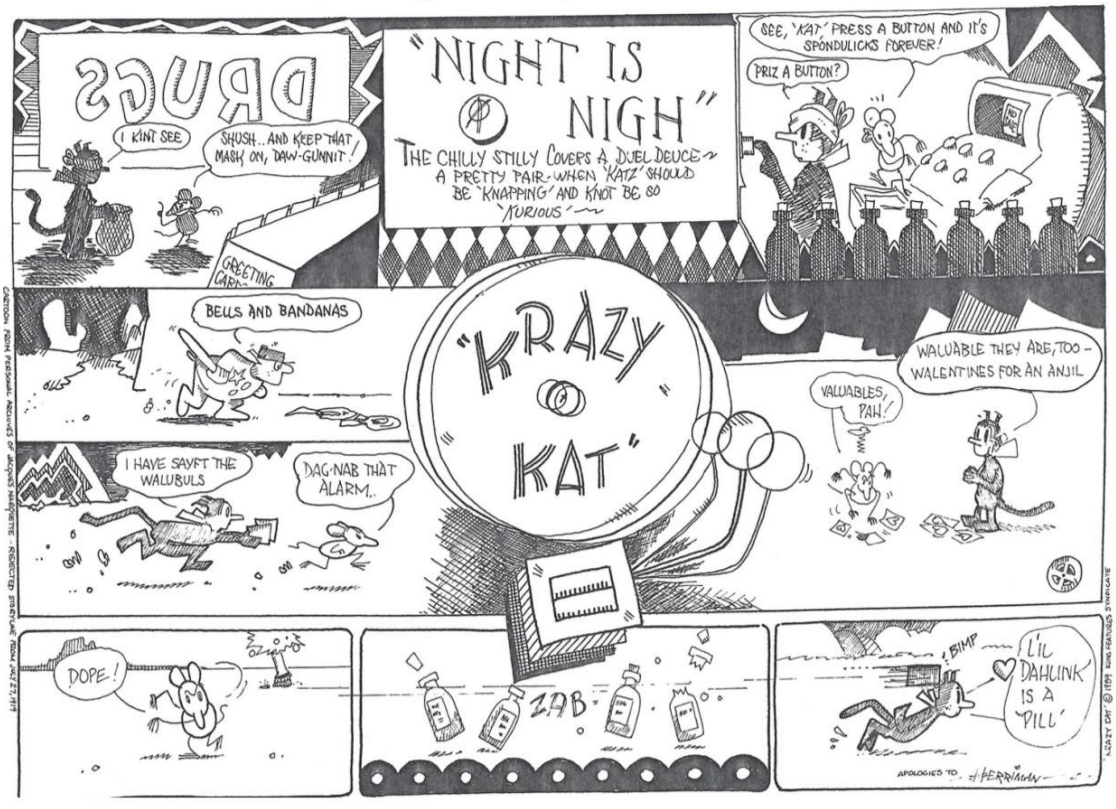


But Wait! There's MORE!!!

Brad Yarhouse and Deanna Morse reach across to France, Australia, and a half-dozen other time zones to coordinate the IAD brainstorm. Jim Middleton's camera chose not to cooperate in the exercise. We learned that "anijam" in French is still probably "anijam."

ASIFA Central's Board all joined to send the month of April packing in a full-throated farewell! Jim's camera worked, but he went with hand-written notes vs word processing (it was still quieter than using a Remington portable...)

And now, an analog, electron-free, farewell...."til the next issue!



ASIFA Central

Newsletter for Summertime 2020

ASIFA АСИФА

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Charging Into the 28th ASIFA Central Retreat - July 17-19, 2020, on a Computer Screen Near Practically Everyone

"It's Virtual" – by Jim Middleton and Bob Swieringa, ASIFA Central Board Members

FRIDAY, July 17:
ASIFA is now 60 years old, and the Central chapter celebrates 45 years in just a matter of months. Its summer retreat was initially intended for Detroit, but an uncontrolled virus that doesn't care about animation techniques (besides stop-motion) had other plans.

ASIFA Central President Brad Yarhouse began the evening by acknowledging the challenges of creating a Zoom-based collection of programs – and offering sincere thanks for the tech-savvy members who made it possible. He added appreciation for first-responders battling the ongoing pandemic and a moment to reflect on those we have lost to its virulence.
Deanna Morse - ***now an official member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences –*** https://www.oscars.org/news/academy-invites-819-membership – spoke on behalf of the international chapter and future activities and offered the ceremonial dropping of the official ASIFA Central retreat cake.

Whoopsie doodle!

One thing you can say for CoVid technology - for matters such as this retreat, it certainly enhanced sign up and attendance. Generally, a well-attended, in-person gathering will bring in two to three dozen attendees. This year's retreat clocked in 97 for the weekend, and 30-45 attended the daily special events, beginning with a lively presentation by Atomic Animation director, James Suhr.

James Suhr took the screen from his California location, using experiences gathered from a vast portfolio of his own, and provided his *"28 and ½ Tips – or – How to Stop Worrying and Become a Professional Artist"* (he said there were actually more, but confessed that math wasn't his best subject). From general observations to specific guidance, he offered direction to aspiring animators and storyboarders, championing a well-curated and dynamic portfolio over a college degree. "Your portfolio is your resume," he stated with conviction, so show your prospective employer "what is in your bucket!" (For those getting the electronic version of this newsletter, the "28 and ½" essay is attached).

Many items on Suhr's bucket had the olfactory property of experience, especially with the reminder that even the most talented employee is still just

From https://www.iamessuhr.com

one part of a larger company, and ultimately (1) You are your own business, and (2) where you are is not forever. To prevent burnout, it is just as important to budget time for yourself and retain resources to feed your own business.

And speaking of the ol' factory, the refreshing mantra of, *"Be On Time, Bathe Often, and Be Easy to Work With"* should never be forgotten. As part of a larger team, co-workers should want to root for you, just as you should be appreciative for every production assistant. Production assistants circulate, and you may rediscover them often in the churning cataract of the corporate world.

Suhr encouraged fresh animators to craft themselves into better artists by studying body construction, understanding perspective and camera placement, finding the blessings of work restrictions, and deconstructing films for staging inspiration, especially with the sound turned off. Find the humor in tragedy, bounce every idea around before dismissing it, and please, please don't send around trailers for epics you can never produce ("If you want to make commercials, go into advertising.").

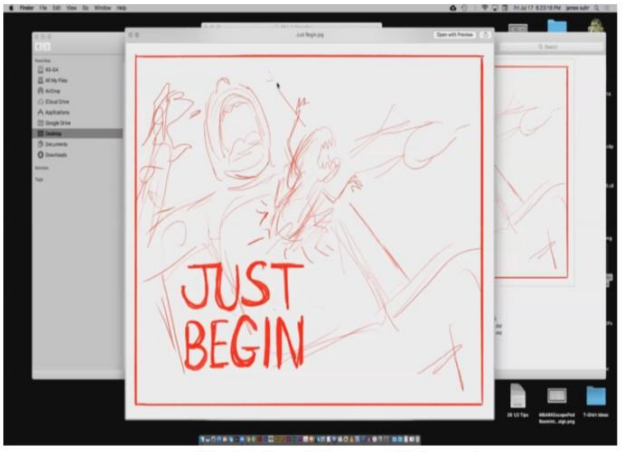
There is so much information to incorporate into every successful scene or sequence. "Forgive yourself. You'll have bad days." Animation can be akin to "a street fight."
And when creating thumbnails, "PULL BACK! YOU'RE IN TOO CLOSE!"

Don't be afraid of tracing other animation or motion in your pursuit of proper posing (As an example of this, your secretary uncovered an interview with Tony White, who was given the "I say" portion of Milt Kahl's Shere Khan in *The Jungle Book* as a tracing assignment from Richard Williams).

More Suhr things:

- See the website *animationscreencaps.com* for screen captures of Disney productions to give the feel for proper composition.
- Animation students who stream films only miss out on the old DVD "extras" that usually incorporated storyboards for the productions (Hayao Miyazaki releases generally have the entire feature storyboard as part of the DVD release). And, to the relief of many, more and more women are becoming storyboard artists.
- Building a story straight ahead can create roadblocks and write you into a corner. It is better to break things apart and see how the individual pieces work as part of the whole.
- Try an exercise - take any topic, ie. "keys," and build a 20 shot narrative about it. Imagine a night watchman checking the locks inside his building, suddenly beset with a zombie apocalypse, who races to his locked car, only to remember that he left his keys in the door where the zombies first appeared.
- Deadlines are always important, regardless of the project - you can have too much time on your hands. A deadline will get you past the brick wall of perfectionism.
- Work on many small possible failures and learn from them, rather than invest a long time on one single possible failure. It's ok to fail.
-

James Suhr - get those pens out!



Motivational Posters, Suhr style

And pull back from overarching concerns while working: "Remember – why can't it be fun?"

Fun fact: *The furthest participant in the ASIFA Central Summer Retreat was from Panama City, Panama!*

SATURDAY, July 18: The Saturday Morning Cartoon Show - Ten minutes into the carefully programmed event by Chuck Wilson, YouTube decided to pull the program "for copyright violations" because the play list included a Mickey Mouse cartoon *already freely available* on YouTube. However, we soon discovered that starting in the playlist after The Mouse created an uninterrupted presentation. *OM triple G – Kitbull* - cue the waterworks!

Time for some Grecian umbrage on YouTube crashes:

The rage! The cardiac tumult! Psychic disasters!
The fury of the thunder kissing bard when he perceives
His piddling opponent picking his dentures with dactyls!
Regard his orbs: how they roll; one this way, one the other!
Ah, the logotomy! Verb breasting adverb, the cristate nouns
Plunging gainst pavid pronouns! Let the bull stylistic
(Husband of cows) rise up and whirl his whiskers!
Ah the lambent raiding of verse, the (my God) tripsis
Of boant anapests leaping in lucent line
Against the skiaphagous luculent relulant
Phalanges of the foe! Yet must we bear in mind
The hepatic ingenium of the adversary, whose
Herpetic tongue knows too well how to rive
The hyaline dynamics of our arch-architect!
The Rest is SILENCE!

(The 'Croaking Chorus' from The Frogs by Aristophanes)

(Once the play list was finished on YouTube despite itself, the next film in automatic rotation was a mini-documentary about IT'S A MAD,MAD,MAD,MAD WORLD with examples of that movie's stop motion, the last work of Willis O'Brien. Animation RULES, even in a Mad World.)

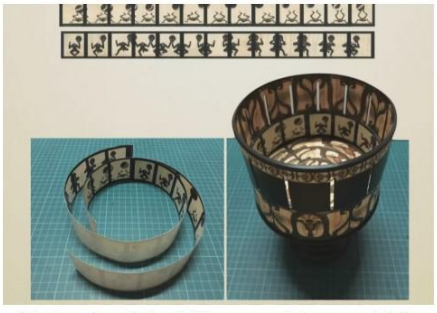
*Kitbull, Pixar 2020, *snif, snif**

Lightning rounds - *Five minute speed talks on upcoming events and techniques set the afternoon in motion*

Deanna Morse - ASIFA International Update - the technical challenges of the websites and communication pipelines for ASIFA International were only complicated by the ongoing CoVid pandemic, but films are being recognized and rewarded, workshops are ongoing, and a hard copy of the ASIFA journal will continue to be alive in our mailboxes.

Christine Veras presented her research and new findings on the Zoetrope's History. She traced the origins from William George Horner's hypothetical Daedaleum to the Zoetrope's multi-patented versions in 1867, uncovering that the original patent and name of the device were first registered the United States by a young sophomore named William Ensign Lincoln. He patented and licensed the invention to the Milton Bradley Company, which was also responsible for patenting the device in the UK and France to guarantee its commercial exploitation in the international market. The details of her findings will appear in a peer-reviewed article this Fall.

William George Homer, hypothesizer of *the Daedaleum (from Christine Veras' lightning round)*



Zoetropic editing! These machines could do anything but make coffee! (Image also from Christine Veras' lightning round)

Steve Leeper - he is animating on toast, crackers, toasted crackers, and we still think Kellogg should take notice - his multiple images on toast took up to 100 minutes per sheet, and he had to develop the frames to hold the crackers, and it all justified the investment in some super expensive crackers - rice cakes nearly burned through!

Brad Yarhouse - he provided IAD information, past and present - with upcoming deadlines for participation (the new deadline is September 1 for this year's assembly). In 2018, there were 7360 participants in the IAD, in 2019, there were 9355. Who knows what October will bring in 2020!?

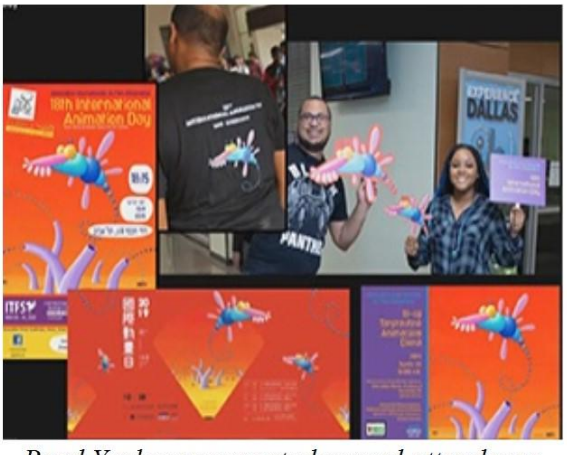
Jim Middleton - Distorting Two Compositions - he used Audacity for fun with public domain music, making a Gershwin solo sound like honky-tonk and cutting a 1922 performance to only its aural frills.

Josh Harrell - The Ultimate Multiplane Setup - ASIFA Central's Ub Iwerks created his multiplane setup using 15 discarded glass panes where he teaches at Detroit's CCS, adapted a stand from IKEA, and worked through reflective glass and parallax challenges for his very deep dive into an analog technique that can track its path to the 1930s. Welcome to the 15th dimension - animation visualizes quantum mechanics!

SATURDAY AFTERNOON'S LIGHTNING ROUND PHOTO GALLERY

Steve Leeper's elegant bread toasting apparatus took up to 100 minutes to process a frame of laser etched deliciousness

For comparison, a mid-century analog toast etching effort by CBS proved disappointing and didn't animate very well (CBS Sunday Morning, 2 August 2020)



Brad Yarhouse reported record attendance and participation to IAD 2019

Josh Harrell's 15 level multiplane camera with special effects lighting in place

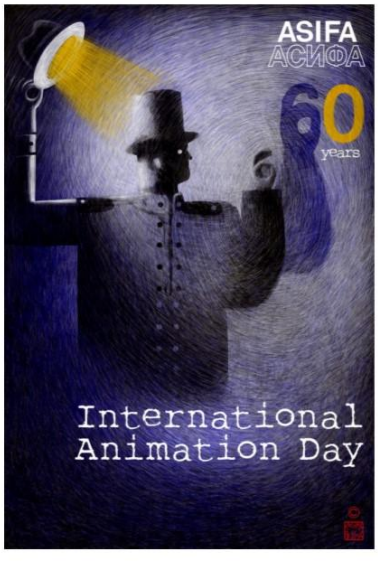
Jim Middleton put the tin *into tin pan alley by altering the Gershwin solo in Rhapsody in Blue, a 1924 composition now in the public domain*

Meet and Greets via Zoom followed, with reacquainted faces and scattered stories, finding alternates to expensive digital tablets and screens, and the benefits and use of Open Toonz, Krita, and Blender software. This was another Zoom experience, and the process was becoming nearly second nature by this time. Logged in participants were divided into smaller groups for –

Then the Break-Out Workshops – with Nearly Instantaneous Show-and-Tell

Zoom Pixilation ***- or - ANIMATING CONNECTIONS ACROSS SOCIAL DISTANCES***- orchestrated by Steve Leeper and Christine Veras, a lively series of spontaneous frames were paced by a percussive soundtrack. The final Zoom Pixilation Animation is available on Vimeo : https://vimeo.com/440136518
Here's a peek:

Stop motion cutouts - coordinated by Chris Sagovac - "What do animators want? Time!" A CoVid pandemic helped provide that this year... Deanna noted that the recurring theme in this workshop of paper dolls was apparently "Off With Their Heads!"



The Premiere of the IAD 2020 ASIFA Central Anijam - An ongoing project since this spring, the anijam had its two minute showing, and it was a hit! Random voices extolled, "It was nice to see it all together - we've only seen bits of it before - it's like watching a new film." The final version will join the IAD celebration in October.

Christine Veras was also able to demonstrate her invention, the silhouette zoetrope, complete with a turntable powered by a manual mechanism, much like very early phonograph. The insect cut-outs were on the outside of the eight slit cylinder, giving a final hypnotic effect of floating butterflies! An earlier version was a finalist for *Best Illusion of the Year* in 2016 and can be seen at – http://illusionoftheyear.com/2016/06/silhouette-zoetrope

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OR
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At once a most laughable and never-tiring toy, and wonderful optical instrument.
Its wonderful effects have never been satisfactorily explained.
Extra pictures by mail for $1 per set.
Also one strip illustrating the progress of the "Grecian Bend." A fashionable lady turns into a camel!
By mail, 25 cents.
MILTON BRADLEY & CO.,
PATENTEES,
SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

Saturday, July 18, 7:30pm - Nina Paley and Seder-Masochism

A father-daughter heart-to-heart

After a quick and quixotic introduction, independent animator, cartoonist, and producer Nina Paley directed President Yarhouse to *Pull The String!* and *Seder Masochism* began its 80 minute ASIFA Central Zoom premiere performance, followed by an extensive Q and A session moderated by Julie Goldstein.

The incorporation of interviews with her late father, appearing here as "God" lent a poignancy to her unblinking look at Exodus and the rituals of the Passover Seder. Where her previous feature, *Sita Sings the Blues*, took on copyright issues at great personal expense, she said this time there was absolutely *no* intent to obtain permission for any of the songs used, including one from a local Urbana band who would have gladly given it. By going without a distributor, Paley's viewer ship increased ten fold; and, by freely sharing, she finds that her contribution-based income exceeds the comparative pittance handed down from a distributor.

Nina Paley encourages safe animation

Paley was very direct about her challenges with the film - "I couldn't relate to Moses," she explained, finding a closer relation to the Merlin Stone book, *When God Was A Woman* (available used from many online sources). The film's theme of the "goddess goes underground" didn't emerge until late in her production, but the Passover story had already become a main portion of the film by then.

Paley's current, comparatively simple lifestyle in Illinois allows her time with her mother and permits her to "make art because it's healthy for me."

Her current project, based on Armageddon (the biblical account, not the 1998 film with Bruce Willis) and called *Apocalypse*, will likely be a short film (however, it should be noted, that both *Sita* and *Seder* began as short films).

Chris Sullivan, set to discuss his *Orbits of Minor Planets* on Sunday, made the point that Nina Paley has inspired other animators through her creation of a truly unique animation style.

An apocalyptic vision by Nina Paley, probably not part of the film, and not used with permission.

Much of *Seder* was created in Flash, but a significant portion was built using Moho animation, a descendant of Anime Studio with a steeper learning curve.

Palegraylabs.com is Paley's merchandising site featuring her current fascination with embroidery and embroidermation - and a few matzoh covers are left!

The earlier YouTube challenge with the Saturday morning cartoons prompted *Seder* to be run through the Yarhouse computer complex onto Zoom, which worked out very well - there were some bumps in the sound, and an occasional appearance of the video control panel, but overall, it felt true to a theatrical viewing, even if it was on a computer screen. The popcorn was *fantastic!*

SUNDAY, July 19: Noon-1pm - *The Meeting of the Board, but Never Bored*

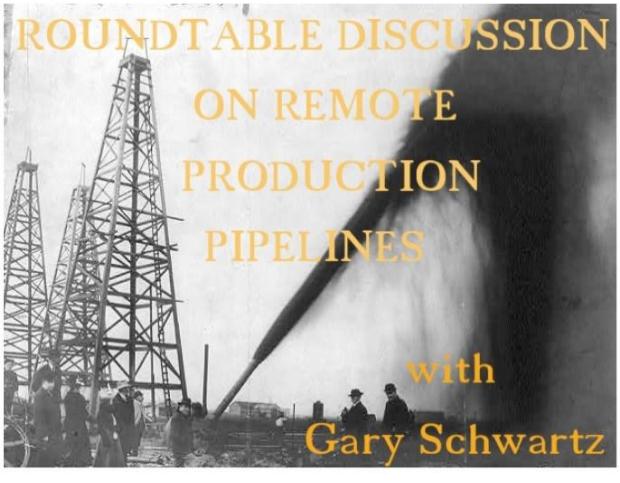
Yes, the board is that adorable

In his patient effort to herd kittens, Chuck Wilson created a special Zoom presence for ASIFA board members at noon.

In a win for whimsy, directions for proper handling of telegram and pony express announcements will remain part of the by-laws.

In a win for efficiency, board members will serve three year staggered terms, committees will be ad hoc and not permanent, gender neutral pronouns will now be a part of the by-law environment.

Still another Fun Fact: Synonyms for ***ad hoc*** include ad-lib, down and dirty, extemporaneous, extemporary, extempore, impromptu, improvisational, improvised, off-the-cuff, offhand, offhanded, snap, spur-of-the-moment, unplanned, or unpremeditated (not unpremedicated, that's something entirely different)



Sunday, 1-2 pm - A Roundtable Discussion on Remote Production Pipelines

The challenge! The angst! The need for stronger coffee at 1pm! Thirty attendees squeezed into the compressed Zoom screen to discuss the challenges of:

- Hybrid classes - The short answer to "How?" is "50:50." The long answer is "I don't know." A thought experiment: Should a student move to another state to stay in a dorm in order to take one on-site class?
- Run half-sized classes, clean and sanitize everything in-between sessions?

Gary Schwartz keeping the communication pipeline open

- How to address the time zone challenges of at-distance students
- If all remote - the challenge of on-site licensed software access
- Some software licenses (ie, *ToonBoom*) are being extended by their respective managers
- The spectre of students *Ghosting* - and how to pull information from them and keep communication channels open, with the consideration for the amount of effort that entails

"We're perceived to have authority we don't really have."

2-2:30 - Public Domain Music Update *- A Jim Middleton Babble-On*

The big question from the presentation was: just how do you make MIDIs out of mp3s? (Answer: we still don't know - a priest may have to be summoned.)

1924 is now the magic year for material entering into the public domain. However, for music, that represents the composition, not the performance, and even if the performance is from 1924, if it's a reissue, or not in your possession, it could be litigated on a state-by-state basis. SO, you can now perform *Rhapsody in Blue*, for example, but you cannot use a 1980 production of it. And even if it's a reissued 1924 recording (near the end of the acoustic era of production), whoever may have released it would still hold the rights to *that* particular "performance" (ie, as a "stereo enhancement" or with "static removed").

In 2021, material from 1925 enters into the public domain - that includes *Always* by Irving Berlin, the *broadway* script to the Marx Brothers' musical *The Cocoanuts,* and material recorded electrically (via microphone) which tends to be of greater interest to corporate copyright lawyers. By 2024, the first films featuring Mickey Mouse fall under that category, but again, only if you have an early print to work from - every subsequent Disney iteration or reissue contains within it some "enhancement" that creates a new performance with a new copyright starting point.

In short, there are a lot of opportunities, but be careful, and when it comes to music, appreciate the 19th century composers and their more obscure performances.

A noisy studio

Not a turntable, but Jim wants to build one someday, because one cannot have too much electrostatic cling.

Sites of possible interest for further Public Domain information:

archive.org, - but beware, much of their material has not been vetted

UCSB Cylinder Audio Archive - http://cylinders.eks.dld.library.ucsb.edu/, 1890-1925 material, but they charge a fee for commercial use of their material

The Duke University Law School web.law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2020 (or, just Google "Public Domain Day") keeps the latest on copyright law available, along with listings of what is up for grabs.

Nauck's Vintage Record Auction - 78rpm.com (rare, mostly PD recordings in mp3 format from their Dismuke radio broadcasts). Nauck's sample show discs #39 - 67 each contain 7-14 hours of programming, with tons of information and obscure background on historic speeches, popular jazz, and even mysterious hillbilly issues from the early 1930s that auction out at $500-$1000. However the CDs are $20, and the series hits its stride at #45. More recent releases contain an index for all available material on the

discs and where to find the selections. ***Sunday, 2:30 - 3pm - Coffee meet and greet, the sequel***

Steve Segal revealed production secrets behind his 1984 production of *Futuropolis*, Melissa Bouwman told how she made use of UICA's band when her film's music rights were gobbled up by BIG BUSINESS, and Deanna Morse described the convolutions in obtaining her music for *Charleston Home Movie*....and the break was OVER! But wait, there was MORE!

Charleston Home Movie, 1980, by Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences member, Deanna Morse!

Links:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roPTnwmWtNs
http://framefools.com/charleston-home-movie-1980/

3pm - Chris Sullivan and The Orbit of Minor Satellites

Keeping the retreat's Midwestern theme going, Chicago based Chris Sullivan provided an update on his work-in-progress for *The Orbit of Minor Satellites*, with a series of completed sequences.

Amid the sharing of production processes, including funding sources, Sullivan provided some experiences and words of wisdom:

The Amazing Chris Sullivan

On Health: "If you don't have cancer by now, you have something wrong with you." This seems to be the curse of entering life's third act. Accept the diagnosis as another new normal, and don't let it rule your life, but do take every opportunity to show this uninvited guest it is quite unwelcome (editor's comment).

On unrealistic expectations: When you're middle aged or beyond, "accept your mediocrity." In other words, build upon the skills you already have.

On story: Film editing creates "causality between the shots." This statement should be embroidered into every animator's pillow.

On film festivals: If you create feature films, you are more likely to get free festival transport and rooms. "I make feature films, but I don't really watch them." However, Sullivan appreciates films that can generate "cathartic tears."

On audiences: "The wonderful thing about film festivals is that the audience isn't filmmakers." This gives the producer the opportunity to experience an audience vs a peer reaction to the final product.

On covering expenses: Crowdfunding is a surprising source of production revenue, often from unexpected donations. "Crowdfunding critics have never really done it." Nevertheless,

Image from The Orbit of Minor Satellites, Chris Sullivan's work-in-progress

Sullivan recommends having a significant amount of work done before seeking crowd funding for any film project.

On recreation: Sullivan reads Nancy Drew stories to unwind, noting, "They're all adventure and no danger. The worst thing that ever happens to her is she gets tied up." He pondered what sort of father she must have. It takes a strange dad to say, "I send little girls into abandoned houses to find the bad man." As Sullivan wrote and rewrote the feature, the realization of a Russian-American subtext came late into the production of *Orbit*, creating a "cold war in the house" for its characters. It wasn't an expectation going into the production - but as Dickens discovered, created personalities can often take over the quill.

The production was constructed around the voice of Boris Karloff, pulled from several sources, and Sullivan procrastinated on getting rights to use the Universal Studios legend. Luckily, Boris Karloff's daughter, now 86 and custodian of all film, image, and verbal performances of her father, gladly gave him permission after hearing the full story of *The Orbit of Minor Satellites*.

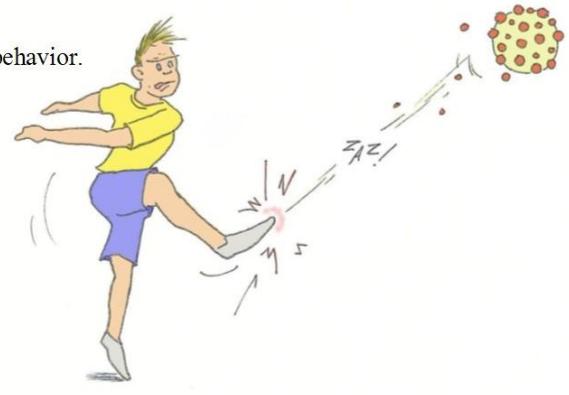
The crowd funding for the feature is at *www.orbitkickstart.com* - remember, when it comes to animated features, no donation is too large!

When Chris Sullivan gave the answer to his last question, Brad looked out at everyone through his ZOOM portal, and let us know we could all go home now, but we were already home, so we all stood for a few seconds, reached over to the "leave meeting" button, and had to face the rest of the day on our own.

Members of ASIFA Central have decided to keep this ZOOM experience going - there will be subsequent meetings over the next several months, the first being around a discussion of the UPA films and their influence. In reality, it's all about the pizza, but a McBoing Boing with pepperoni sounds pretty nice, too.

Open-source and alternative production packages discussed during the 2020 ASIFA Central retreat: Opentoonz, Krita, Blender 2.8, Moho (formerly Anime Studio), and the grease pencil function in the latest version of Blender that creates 2D animation. Alternate for a Cintiq tablet - Kamvas Pro 16

Till next time, you're on your own best behavior.



James Suhr shares his 28½ Tips

Pondering the shelf life of laser etched toast

From - INSTRUCTIONS FOR A GROUP PIXILATION
by Steve Leeper and Christine Veras

In case some other adventurous souls wish to create similar Big Fun:

At the beginning of the workshop review the instructions and give time to orient ourselves but you'll want to review the following steps beforehand:

Once we begin an animation **DO NOT TURN OFF YOUR CAMERA** or leave the Zoom space! Removing or adding members completely reshuffles the Zoom grid.

SETTING UP

Your video camera should be set to the default "Mirror Camera". This will help you keep oriented to your space. (If you have never changed this setting on Zoom, this is the default mode and you. **Make sure you have enough space to move around in front of the camera.** Your web-cam should be situated in such a way that you can look closely into the camera for an extreme close-up and step back from your camera for (if possible) a full body shot.

Use a post-it note or tape to label your Right and Left on the edges of your screen for quick reference. Once we begin, things can get confusing. All instructions during the workshop will refer to your personal Right and Left.

Virtual backdrops are not a good idea. As cool as thay are, for this workshop as they will conflict with and distort the final image.

Check your Zoom Settings. Turn your video on and mute your microphone before entering the Zoom space. Check that your audio is turned on.

Set your display to gallery mode. So you can see all the participants in a grid view. You'll find this on the upper right corner of screen.

Finally. Be aware that what you see is not what you get. The capturing image will follow Steve's computer and that is why it is extremely important to follow the verbal instructions given and post-it markers on the sides of your screen.

Let's start animating!!

28 1/2 Tips: Or How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Became A Professional Artist - by James Suhr

(All tips included are for your safety)

Prologue: Everyone at one point or another in their life wishes they could travel back in time to tell a younger version of them self what you now know in order to save yourself a bunch of grief and heartache that comes with learning. Well guess what? I'm your future self. Surprise! You're a lot hairier and uglier than you expected to be in the future, but I'm here, I'm now, and I'm willing to help! You see, back when I was in school 1.0, I went to Kendall, your sister school. Back then they didn't have an animation department. Actually, they did, was just me. I wanted to go into animation, got except to those schools, but couldn't afford those schools, but I got a scholarship to Kendall and I was determined to use the Illustration program to help me reach my goal. In addition to the obvious Illustration classes, I took Independent Studies for basically all my electives in the vain hope of trying to figure out how to animate and storyboard—knowing nothing, and having no one to guide me. It has been a long and arduous road to get where I am, and this presentation is based on tips and information I wished I had learned sooner rather than later. But that's the point of teaching (and stories in general), to share experiences so that another has it easier than you did. Some of these are hard truths that at first may sound discouraging, but I feel are important to respect you as a budding artist, and give you a more rounded preparation of reality beyond just the usual "Being a professional artist is fun! (giggle, giggle)" I mean it can be (A LOT!) but mainly when you understand and respect all aspects of, social, business, learning, and playing—otherwise it can be a miserable pain with lots of heartache. What I'm saying will not Hallmark Card over important stuff, disrespecting you as adults and releasing you into the world with just the idea that your dreams will take you where you want to go. Also to save you pain, I've done my best to leave out the gag inducing point of purchase bullshit wisdom that we hear all the time like, "When life hands you lemons, make lemonade." As we go along, I want you to notice that this talk will try to follow the process of drawing: moving from from general to specific. It will start off as advice for every artist here can use regardless of individual discipline, and we'll slowly work our way into animation, and end talking about storyboard specific information. Take what you need from this, and to hell with the stuff you can't. (Actually all the stuff here is good advice so don't 'to hell' with any of it.)

Disclaimer #1: I tend to use swear words a bit in person, and while I'll do my best to reign it in during this talk, if you are squeamish about certain words, I am truly sorry for your pain, but let's keep something in perspective: You are in college. You are at least 18 or older, which makes you an adult. That means you can buy cigarettes, have sex, create a kid, get married, get divorced, have to pay rent, need to get a job, be responsible for taxes, and vote. When compared to all that, how big do two little words like 'shit' or 'damn' seem now? So long story short, I'm gonna probably say some fucking shit.

Disclaimer #2: Sometimes I may share opinions in ways that at times might sound harsh or strong. I may trash a show, movie, a comic, an artist, a game, or a musician, etc.. that you might like. Half of the time I try to tell my opinions in a hyperbolic way hoping to either be silly or comedic (sometimes even highlighting how dumb my own opinions are in the process), but also in the hopes of inviting debate. I always believe that two minds are better than one, and we learn when different thoughts come together. But I recognize that not everyone may enjoy my delivery or the opinion shared, and they may think I am putting them down by way of putting down what they like. If you disagree, know that I think that that is wonderful. I can say that a show, movie, or whatever else you like is garbage without meaning you are garbage. Don't be afraid of what you love. And don't be afraid to tell me what you love. I know for certain that there are things I love that you would definitely say is awful and garbage. And if you did, know that I'd still love what I love, while valuing your opinion on the subject. I value you. I value that you like what you like—even if I disagree about it.

Disclaimer #3: I don't always math good, or language well, so the actual number of tips in this handout is arbitrary. Don't be holding me to exactly 28 and 1/2 tips exactly because, because I don't care. Focus on the information being shared, not the vessel delivering it.

If we are all ready, let's get started...

Part I. In the beginning...

1. Your degree means nothing. Now that I have your attention, and a short amount of time before the teachers here kill me with a poisoned blowdart, let's get into what I mean. That doesn't mean you shouldn't have gone to college or that you are waisting your time here. Just don't expect anyone on the industry beyond small talk to care or be interested when it comes to employing you. You are hired for the work you make. We are in the position to create. We produce tangible and usable things with our skills, and is what you are being hired for. The fact you went to and ivy league school, to CalArts, or to Redneck Bumpkin High in the middle of No-where doesn't matter to us. Your portfolio all we care about. Your portfolio is your degree. Your portfolio is your resume.

1 1/2. BTW, your resume doesn't mean shit either. That's just for recruiting and HR to feel like they did their jobs. Again it's all about your portfolio. You do need to make one, make it easy to read, and try to have a little sense of design about it without going too overboard—you're an artist after all, let the art seep into all aspects of your life and be one with who you are.

2. You are your own business. This lesson I actually learned from an interview with Walt Disney. He was asked about what he did with his vast wealth that he made from his company. He said that he would take a lot of his own money and put it back into the company to fund and grow the projects he wanted the company to do. So I got to thinking... "Can I do that on a poorer level?" That was a game changer for me. I would put a certain amount of money aside for classes or technology to help me grow. Not savings for a rainy day. Not just money aside when I needed to buy things, but an actual business and technology budget to pay for promotion and upgrades. A certain amount of time was also set aside so that I would continue to learn. I grew both a movie library and a literary one too. I know you are starting out and money is tight in the beginning, I've been there. This is anytime you get a surplus or surge of cash. Now as lighter in affair as all this sounds, there is another side of this lesson that is a little darker.

No matter who you work for, or what company you are have printed on your paycheck, you are your own business. They hired you because of what you can deliver to them. But know the company doesn't care about you. If you fail to be able to provide work for them, they will let go of you. They don't care about your debts, they don't care about if you are paid enough or not, they don't care about if you have health insurance, they just to keep you to get your work. Many of these companies in the past have paid thugs and have threatened workers who tried to form unions asking for better working rights—even though interfering with the forming of unions is illegal. They been agist, sexist, and racist repeatedly in the past (and by the past I mean anytime before when I typed this). And don't think it won't happen again just because it is you. I have seen it firsthand. You need to treat them like you are a snake charmer: Entertaining others with your weird skills and making a living doing it, but never forget that you are sitting right across the way from something capable of striking you and killing you. Lawsuits over wage fixing, outsourcing work to overseas whenever possible, trying to skirt around labor laws and negotiated contracts to pay you less and less and less. When it comes to negotiating contracts for the entertainment unions, the companies send a whole team of lawyers whose sole purpose is to do nothing but negotiate your rights away if possible. They do not care about you... but they need you. You make what they don't know how to make, and can't make, so take advantage of that to get what you need to survive as a business.

3. Where you are is not forever. This is probably the closest that I will get to that dime a dozen b.s. wisdom I mentioned earlier, but I have more to say about it than just being a slogan. A person's career is like a game of chess. Sometimes you get to advance and move ahead, other times you have to sacrifice something to survive. While some setbacks are frustrating, they won't be forever if you are willing to put in the time to change the course of your game. I couldn't afford animation schools. I got a scholarship to Kendall and I tried to develop my drawing skills so that I could get into the training programs. They cancelled the training programs in the last 90's and I went into web design and freelancing illustration work for several years. I used the money from that to pay for animation school. I continued to do that kind of work throughout UCLA (where I studied animation), and then I finally got into animation in my late 20's. You might sometimes have to be willing to take a large risk, but you don't have to settle for where you are now as your final place.

4. Email people like you are talking to them. I have gotten emails from students, and while being polite—which is nice and respectful, y'all all talk like a bunch of lifeless robots in your emails. Don't be so afraid of offending the person you are talking to that you forget that the greatest offense is not acting like a human at all. Don't swear like I goddamn do, but act like there is a person sitting in front of you when you are typing. That is the secret to sounding like you have a bit of charm and personality in your emails. Personality is memorable, stiffness isn't. Your emails sometimes are your first ways of someone getting to know you, and sounding wooden and lifeless is a great way to be overlooked. We don't like it when CGI is in an uncanny valley of realism, and it also works the same in emails. We know when we are talking to a human being, and we like talking to a person, not a robot. Also, don't sound so desperate! Jeez!

5. Lean on each other in school, but don't need each other to reach your goals. I have some great friends from college that are like brothers and sisters to me. We still talk and even hangout together. Some I message all the time. We still push each other and encourage each other all the time with our art, but our focuses and fields are drastically different. I have seen students that were great as a group in school, but after graduation some kept putting off plans to their future because they were waiting on someone else in the group to be ready to put a plan in motion... and it never happened. Everyone has their own needs and responsibilities. If you want to move somewhere, don't be co-dependent, do that on your own. If you friends can follow, that's icing on the top, but you are responsible for your future—they aren't and shouldn't.

6. Be on Time. Bathe often. Be easy to work with. My life drawing instructor, the great Glen Vilppu, told me that those three things are the key to staying employed. In my early years in the industry, those three things are all I had to get my next job. I've built a reputation that has people asking for me. People need you to show up and do your job, and to deliver your work on time. You work around others, be respectful of them and yourself by doing at least the basic hygiene. Everyone works 40 hours+ a week, and deadlines are stressful, so try to make it easier for the people around you to achieve their goals. Don't be a prima donna jerk. Humble yet confident. Now you may notice that Glen didn't include in his list the word talent or skill. He said that that will come in time, but everyone can control the first three requirements.

7. Be nice to production! Your Production Assistants, Production Coordinators, and your Production Managers are usually more excited to be on the project you are on than you, more excited to work at the company you are at than you, and they are probably a better person than you will ever be... But they are also paid way less than you. They are some of the first employees in on a production, and some of the last to finish at the end of the production. Some of them might rise through the ranks and be your boss one day. They might be the ones remembering you and suggesting your name for a job. So from a business standpoint, don't be douchebag. From a humanity standpoint you treat them with the dignity they deserve because they are working just as hard to make a huge goal possible. Remember,

a great artist—a great person—treats all around them with respect. Except for John Stadlemeyer. That guy is an ass. Be mean to him at every turn.*

*John Stadlemeyer doesn't exist. He was created for this joke.

7 1/8. Don't chase competitions!!!!!!! I can't stress this enough. I've done it, and so have many others, but if you hear of a competition, or a call for artists, only submit work that you have on hand now, don't think you can make something in the week or two before the deadline and think it'll look good enough to go up against someone who's been putting weeks into their portfolio. Yes, the deadline will push you, and you may be proud you met the deadline, but seriously, you ramp up stress for nothing, and I guarantee you it doesn't look as good as you think it does. As a professional, it takes time to develop a story. It takes time to animate something top tier. For students you are are still learning, so it takes even longer. Don't take time and energy away from running after a what amounts to a get rich quick type of thinking and abandon the projects that you have time to get done with better quality. Be confident in what you already have—or don't apply. Don't chase the competitions, apply with what you have—or don't apply at all.

8. You don't need to accept every promotion that comes your way. I am finally becoming a director. It has been a long and winding road to that accomplishment, and many people have wondered why I haven't been one sooner. I have had a couple of offers, but I turned them down. You see, I started in industry straight out of school from UCLA. While my directors liked my work and working with me, I learned that I was still missing important information needed to be a more efficient and better artist. Now I didn't know what I was missing, because how could I know what I didn't know, but I did have sense and awareness that I was missing something. I eventually took a job down from the Storyboard Artist level to that of a Storyboard Revisionist. It was one of the best moves I have ever done! As a board artist you can be overwhelmed trying to meet your deadline—especially when first starting out in the field. But as a revisionists you have time to look around and learn about the workflow pipeline, how your drawings affect the next person in line from you, how the ones before you affect you, and learn from your director how to be a better board artist. It is a job that can allow you to hone your craft in small ways till you are ready to move up to boards. And when I moved back up to boards, I was a stronger and more valuable artist in that position. Now after moving up to boards I had been on a path to director for a while, but I have two kids, and one is a special needs kid that is autistic-nonverbal-with developmental delays. I needed to be there for my family until both kids got out of preschool. I also didn't want to be one of those dads that only sees his kids on the weekend. As a board artist or revisionist, I could get in early, and leave early to get home to see my family. That was important to me, especially in my kid's youngest years. You know what you need in your life and when you are ready, or you aren't. You know when you have the energy or not. Don't just accept something because it is there or expected—do what is best for your business.

8 3/4. There is more to life than work. I love working in animation. If I had to do it all again and choose any other job, I'd still pick this field, but we all get tired and burnout. As a professional artist we are asked to give a lot and sometimes the well seems to get dry (or is dry). Our job is also our hobby, but we need to have things outside of art to get up away from the desk and refilling the well of ideas and inspiration. I do MMA and work like a hobbit in my garden. Both get me active and both have a different way of releasing stress from my life. I beat the crap out of someone during the week and get my exercise, and on the weekends my garden gets me outside and in touch with my tender side. We are dimensional and complex—and we should be allow ourselves to be. Don't be an underdeveloped one-dimensional being. Get up and out and notice how much faster you can work when you sit down at the desk.

Part II. Shit starts to get real...

9. Try to aim for storytelling that you see on screen as your minimum goal. Things just got a bit more serious a bit quickly, huh? Well, think about this. When I was in school I looked at tv and movies. I knew they hired someone to make that, so if I wanted that person's job, I needed to be able to do AT LEAST what that person could do, or why would they hire me? (They already have a person that can do that level of work). Now from a student's point of view that sounds like a tall order. Surprise! It is! But that level of thinking will catapult you to your next level. Now in the beginning I don't mean do super cleaned up drawings when it comes to boards or rough animation. First learn to setup compositions and move the camera with loose drawings. Make studies from movies and shows you like to see how you might board that sequence. Practice perspective and acting with loose simpler drawings and let time work its course on sophistication in your drawings, but get your basics down solid, and your basics are what you see on screen.

9A. For God's sake learn construction! I know you are all learning, but there are so many mushy characters thrown at me on too regular of a basis from students. Learn how to build, draw through, and construct a character that has form and believability. Even if it is a super cartoony and graphic way of drawing, there is still construction and rules to how it is assembled. Know that as I am ridiculing you, I was told the same thing, with the same amount of frustration by the professionals of the time. Please learn how too fucking construct a drawing (for your sake).

9B. Restrictions can be a creative blessing.

10 1/8. Don't just board for class, because your competition isn't. If you want to be a storyteller, then everywhere is an opportunity to improve your storytelling skills. Walt Disney knew his artists would sometimes take breaks on a production and draw funny drawings of each other (and even Walt himself) instead of working. Now instead of dissuading it, he encouraged it because he knew it helped the artists develop their storytelling skills. I've been on productions myself where we would draw stupid jokes on post-it notes, or do caricatures of each other. I doodle sometimes in the margins of my boards, leaving surprises for the revisionists and directors who dare to look around the outside of the frame. When doing life drawing, find a story in the pose and try to tell that story in that one pose. The people who are boarding at other schools like CalArts and Sheridan didn't start boarding in their senior year, they've been boarding since their freshmen year. Some take to it faster than others, but all of them have had some experience by their senior years, and it shows in their work. Don't just think because you did one assignment you are board artist. Practice making smaller boards that just tell one or two gags, or a small action bit. While y'all are all together and sketch and make stories for each other during that hangout session. Do short exercises that hone your storytelling. It is repetition that builds experience. Experience is true knowledge because you get it. Anything less is just awareness what it is you need to work on. Telling stories should be important to you and doing just the class assignment should not be too little and not enough for you.

12. Do studies from movies. You have a couple of off the shelf choices with this that you can modify. You can just study cool compositions—which is great—or draw nasty ugly thumbnails breaking down the major story beats of camera work in a scene (or study just the the acting choices used and practice those drawing those poses). Really there are no rules, right way or wrong way, just don't be afraid to study from something that you love and inspires you. Think of this as no different than doing an old master study back in days of yore. (And I mean like yore yore.) If you feel you are lacking in areas of drama, study that. If you want to improve drawing funny faces, practice from material that can help you with that. Action. That. Camera movement. That. Make the exercise fit your needs.

11. Watch scenes from movies without the sound on. It is easy to get caught up in the

emotion of a scene from a great movie because of the music, the acting, great camera work, the sound design, and intelligent editing choices. But to understand what the director is thinking, you need to turn off the sound and just watch how they orchestrate the imagery. How does the director motivate the next cut? Why is the information on screen the chosen information to show? What is the information telling us? What is the visual rhythm of the shots? etc, etc... Be critical in your questioning. Invite friends to analyze a scene with you if it will help, but do it with the sound off.

12.85. Bounce ideas off other people. At work I notoriously show gags to other people on my crew. I use this to gauge their reaction and see if I can improve a section, or it is good enough. Sometimes they will throw out a better idea, and that gets into the board—making me look that much better of an artist (though I give credit where credit is due). BUT I AM SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW TWO BRAINS ARE BETTER THAN ONE AND THAT MAKES ME A BETTER BOARD ARTIST.

13. When coming up with stories, have an all-out "YES!" period. Coming up with stories and/or story ideas is really hard. It's like raising the Titanic or shot putting the moon. Because of this, you need to take the pressure off to get the creativity going. The best way to lower the pressure is have a writing session (or two) where you just write anything and everything you want to see and do with your project. This is your all-out YES! period. Nothing is wrong, no idea is bad, there is no budget of time or money, just you playing around like back when you were a kid and anything is possible. Think of it as a veritable rumspringa of ideas. A wishlist of possibilities!! Then after a day or two when the high of being creative has worn off, go in and edit things down, being practical and judicious... just don't do it in the very beginning before you have had a chance to enjoy being creative.

14. Don't write epics! And Don't board me a trailer! I get it, you want to be taken seriously. You have a budding deep soul that wants to tell me something big... but news flash, you don't have the chops yet. I've seen tons (TONS!) of young artists that try to make a 10 minute, 20 minute, 80 billion minute film ideas. They all have 40 trillion characters that each have a library of backstory to them. Yet, the end result is always the same: They either take years to make with the artist petering out of energy and interest never finishing the project, or they finish it quickly and it looks like garbage. There is also that person that knows they have a huge story, and knows they need to tell something small, so they make a trailer of a larger story (which they say might even be a trilogy). I'm sorry, I don't take trailers seriously—and neither do many professionals. Directors, recruiters, and studios want people that can tell stories, not make ads. Go to an ad house if you want to make trailers (there's no shame in that), but don't use a trailer as your way to break into the animation industry. Tell a 1-3 minute story. Have a character start one way, then change by the end (or the world around him changes). Have a story arc. Have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Keep the idea down to 1-3 characters. You don't need to give me every damn person in the universe to tell a compelling story, just give me at least one character I can relate or sympathize with.

14 (The Addendum). Yes, you can point me to fan trailers that worked for an exceptional person. Okay obstinate person in the audience, there is an exception or two out there, but seriously look at the quality put into that project, and if you can match that, prove me wrong. If you can't match that level of quality, the deck is extremely stacked against you to point of near impossibility. Proving there is an exception does not null and void my point—look at the context around the exception.

14B. Don't be afraid to trace over things to learn. I used to have a bad problem of drawing torsos and upper legs way longer than they really are. Almost like an El Greco sort of thing. (If you don't know who the artist El Greco is, please get an art education and look him and many other artists outside of animation up). The way I changed my habits was by taking photos of the figure and tracing on top of them to reprogram my thinking. Now I wouldn't slowly trace and copy everything with 100% accuracy. I would still act like I'm

trying to gesture quickly in class, just I had a guide to help me stay on track. I did this for months using anywhere from 20 to 50 poses at a time. I still do it from time to time to pick up anatomy I would miss or overlook. I do it to study other people's styles and try to remain flexible in style. There is no shame in this is if it is for learning, just don't put this stuff in your portfolio. When you get up to a level of comfortability in your tracing, go back to free handing again and see what you've learned. It's a tool for learning, so don't feel shame or embarrassment.

14C. Look at art other than animation! Animation, and especially its design, has a certain amount incestuousness to it. Animation designers sometimes look too much at other animation designers and it can all look the same. This can happen at the board level, and really every level of animation. Look at other art to inspire and add depth to your work. Like I said before, don't be one-dimensional.

15. In your portfolio, include 2-3 boards: 1 action scene, 1 acting/comedy scene, and the third one can be of your choosing. The reasoning for this is very simple, it helps a director figure out what your strengths are and how to cast you on a project. You may be proud of your action, but to the director's needs it may be ho-hum. Yet, your acting in a dialogue scene is really, really good to them. (You can still be in the running for consideration of getting work!) Or, maybe your action is balls to the walls badass, but your acting in dialogue scenes is okay at best. (Again, you can still be in the running!) With this strategy you have casted a wide enough net to have better chances of ensnaring someone to hire you. Also, to answer your question you are asking yourself right now, the length of each board should be like an entire scene. You don't need to give me your entire 20 minute long board, just the best two scenes, or the best scene from one idea, and the best scene from another idea. In animation we'd call that a sequence actually. An example might be when Miles Morales and Peter B. Parker are trying to steal the computer from Oscorp in Spiderverse. Or the sequence where Remmy is figuring out how to cook using human avatar in Ratatouille. Another example might be the scene where Iron Giant where the Iron Giant decides to save the humans from the bomb. Each sequence is like a mini-story within a bigger one: it has a beginning/setup, middle/conflict, climax, and end; characters or events change in some from fashion from how they are at the beginning of the sequence versus how they are/state they are in at the end of the sequence.

16. When life gives you lemons, make a cartoon. Okay I lied, this is the piece of advice that gets closest to dime a dozen wisdom, but I don't know many artists that I work with that don't use their art to escape anxiety, other mental illness, trauma in their life, or trauma from their past. Whether they are conscious of themselves doing this up to debate, but they all are doing it to treat something that was missing in their life. We are all scarred beautiful creatures. The scars, as well as the smiles, are part of our voice. Using these experiences to make characters relatable can feel embarrassing or make you feel open and vulnerable, but that feeling is a blessing in disguise. Neil Gaiman once said in a class on writing (and I paraphrase) if you are feeling uncomfortable and vulnerable in telling your story, then you are right where you need to be to make something that connects with others. That vulnerability is important. An artist that I dearly love, Sergio Aragones, used to make tons of artwork for MAD Magazine. He once told a story about being at his mother's funeral crying. It was a rainy day and during the graveside ceremony he kept hearing this noise that sounded like, "slish, pop!" He looked over to see his aunt (in her 90's) in tall 5" heels sinking into the mud because of the rain. His uncle would then push her back up from falling over backwards, and the whole process would repeat over and over again. This made Sergio laugh and he knew that the next series he was going to do was a look at death and all the absurdities. When the pain of life tries to pull you down, pull that creative parachute you have to save you and enjoy what comes out.

17. Animation, and storytelling is done in passes. The old saying is "Rome wasn't built in a day," right? If you are trying to do it all and animate or board you might (maybe, possibly?) make something good, but you are going to burn yourself out very, very quick

fast. Do the work in passes, only focusing on a few things at a time. When animating I might make the gesture I really would like to have as my storytelling gestures, and then work only on the legs and hips. Then I might go back and animate the upper body, with facial animation last (because gestures sell so much more than the face in a wide shot). And within these halves I might only work on one thing at a time as well. When boarding, I like to draw loose garbage drawings of where I want the character to be in a shot, handle all the acting. Then I worry about camera and fielding. And then go back and do the backgrounds around the action. Then I go back to the characters after I've completed the whole board and had it critiqued to clean up the characters. Then touch up camera work and bgs if needed. Don't do it all at once like a wild maniac swinging in the wind. Be smart. Pick your targets, and hit those.

17D. Making a film is a streetfight. Nothing is off the table in terms of how to get the job done as long as it looks good at the end of the day. Don't worry so much about 'the right way' that you lock up and don't know what to do. You know more than you think. You've taken in a lot of media and your instincts are probably good, they just need polishing. So don't worry about a 'right way' or a 'wrong way'. Just worry about making it look good and figuring out a more efficient way (without losing quality) for next time.

18. Forgive yourself. At the end of the day you are going to make mistakes from time to time and that's okay—get over it. You don't have to forget what you've done (because that is how we learn), but you do need to forgive yourself.

18 (From Earth 4). Change has to happen in your story. Your either need your character to change by the end of your story, or the world around him needs to. If it is your character, they need to start with a want and by the end of the story get what they need, not what they want. (Or vice versa with the world around them.) I won't go into this much further because there are a TON of great books that address this better than I ever could, but know that this is something to seek out and want in your storytelling.

18 (The Forgotten Child). Story gets rewritten. Whether at the writing phase, the board phase, or the editing phase, a story goes through constant changes for whatever reasons. A good storyteller rolls with this and accepts this fact. A great storyteller can tell when the change is needed, and what is important to keep. When in doubt of which is which, simplify your story.

Part III. Know your craft...

18.99. Trace the model sheets. When I first start on a show, I will trace right on top of the model sheets either on the computer, or if it is printed for me, with a new piece of paper and a lightbox. I do this for the first three weeks I'm on a show minimum whenever I have a spare minute. If I am fortunate to have a ramp up week (a week where they give you time to practice the characters and read through the materials—more rare than common) I spend almost all my time that first week tracing the model sheets.

19.2. Your storytelling has to be clear. You can't be there at every viewing of your work to explain what is going on in your story, to explain every metaphor, to exposit every backstory, so your story has to be able to stand on its own two legs. If you find yourself explaining extra information not in your boards to people when you pitch, then you should know your board isn't clear, and you usually need to trim things down simpler rather than add more complexity to it—it is the complexity that is getting you in trouble.

19 Redux. It is your job to find the story in the script. You may not be a great writer, but you have to be able to know how a story works and how characters develop in order to do your job as a storyboard artist well. You can just draw what is on the page. That is called

servicing the script. It's the minimum. You can have a career doing that, but if you find yourself not getting onto the shows you want and why your boards don't stand out, I'm telling you now why—you are probably just servicing the script. It is your job to look into the script, see the structure, support it, find the emotion, add to it, find the humor, or add to it. An adequate board artist meets the script. A good board artist pluses what is there. A great board artist makes the script their own. Open that script up like looking into the hood of car and tinker around, adjust where needed if you think it makes the scene better. Move stuff around if you think something isn't flowing right. If you are starting out, ask your director if it is okay to make the changes by pitching the idea to them. The script should be seen as the beginning, and you are carrying the torch of the idea further, not just holding it in place till the next person comes along.

19 1/2. One thing at a time. To aid you in the clarity of storytelling, there is an old axiom of "one thing at a time." The human brain is a wonderfully complex organ capable of great intellectual thinking, but it can be easily overwhelmed with processing too much information at once. In art classes we talk about focal points: creating a hierarchy of information to guide the viewer. Why would that be different just because the pictures start moving? So don't have two, three, four, eighteen things going on at once. If things are moving in the bg, make it a repetitious thing so it reads as noise, and make the characters we are supposed to focus on have precedence. If there is a complex action going on, pose it out one beat at a time till you get past the complexity. Things can overlap so actions seem more natural and not so staccato, but make it happen one important thing at a time. Or I will find you.

19 2/3. Don't get too attached to your work. A finished and rendered drawing doesn't always equal a great, or more importantly, a useful drawing. This one hits right in the ego, but I see so many artists just trying to impress each other with a final rendered drawing. Cool. No, not really. I won't knock there is technical skill, but I make around 1200 panels per board. Are you capable of doing that rendering for every panel? Really? Make the drawing functional to the purpose it is fulfilling. Storyboards need construction and perspective, but that can all be done in quick sketches, not final finished paintings. And there are revisions and changes you need to make constantly till you are done. You're not the center of the universe or the production, so be prepared to have your idea cut, or changed. You'll always have the version you did, but draw quickly so the pain is less when stuff is cut or changed—which is inevitable.

19E: Paragraph 3. When drawing your thumbnails, draw small. Even some professionals draw thumbs with a large zoomed in rectangle, but I guarantee you you will draw faster, catch problems, and edit quicker if you shrink the drawing space you have down a lot. Just for thumbnails. Thumbnails are for looking at story and shot flow from a macro level. You solve a lot of your problems out here so you can worry more about the technical stuff when you board. Plus directors love to see a bunch of thumbs because they can catch issues or problems early on—and collaboration over ideas here can sometimes lead to even better solutions than any one single person would have arrived at on their own.

19 Alpha-Beta. Draw until you think overseas can animate your scene, then stop and move onto the next drawing. A former storyboard supervisor once told me that the way to think about doing a board is to imagine my work being given to someone in another country to animate the scene. Now that person may not get all of the animatic, just the scene they are to animate. They may not speak the same language as you, or know the full story. So, is all the information there to help them get the scene done right? If not, add till they can. Also, this can be a helpful guide to let you know when to stop working on a drawing and move onto the next thing.

19 9/10. Your goal as a board artist is to deliver material that a director can cut together easily. You need to create scenes that flow into each other. Screen direction needs to be maintained, you need to have your motivations for cuts or camera movement, your shots to

feel like the eye can follow where to look next. A test to see if stuff is cutting well, quickly flip through your work. If you can follow it as it moves at a hundred miles an hour, your scene is doing better than worse. This isn't the only way to test, and it isn't the end of your job, but it is one way to see if things are working.

20. Always draw a perspective grid. (Now we're getting into the technical shit.) It is nice to draw a bg for your boards. But sometimes shit happens and your deadline is fast approaching, so when in doubt, grid it out. Remember: you generally raise the perspective grid to show geography and how things spatially relate to each other, and you generally lower it to create drama.

20. Plastic Ruler. A lot of us nowadays drawing on the computer has lots of tools, but I have not found a digital ruler I like, so having a plastic ruler was suggested to me by a colleague. Why plastic? Because it won't scratch your screen.

21. Don't overlook or underestimate a head tilt. So this seems little and silly, but it works like gangbusters (I really hate that term gangbusters, but it's in my head, and now it probably is in yours). Don't tilt everyone's heads, and don't do it all the time, but say your main character is standing in the middle of a group of onlooking supporting characters. Having a couple of the characters around the main character tilt their heads. It adds interest and helps guide the eye. I like to use it on when one character is listening to another in a wide shot. Or if a character turns their head, maybe instead of an expected straight up and down turn, you have a little tilt to help make the character not feel so robot and puppet controlled—but flesh and bones. Again, don't use this all the time, but have it in your back pocket to break up stiff always upright character acting. (It's a spice, not the main cooking ingredient.) Also, please don't have the head start normal and then tilt it like a confused dog. I can't say you can never do that, but that is a rare occurrence. I'm talking about using the tilt in a static pose to help add small flair to a pose.

21 (The Sequel). Make a 'Morgue' or 'Graveyard' to hold to non-used panels. I do this on all my boards. I make a section at the end of the project called either "Morgue" or "Graveyard" for shots and panels I don't think I need—but hey, you never can tell! If I do this in Storyboard Pro, I make a funny drawing that stands out (usually in the theme of a graveyard or morgue or death—mostly darkish humor); if making in Photoshop I title a folder appropriately named and put drawings there. As I work, I store unused panels there, and from time to time something may get pulled out of that section back into the main project. Now don't include your graveyard in your final board, but while working it's a great thing to have.

21 (The Sequel's Sequel). Please number all your scenes and panels. I don't need to explain, just do it. I'll think better of you for it.

21 (The Overused Joke). As a student, you should probably add more poses than you are using. I don't want to send anyone into a crazy spiral of animating boards, but I will say that student boards typically could use a little more posing out. I get it, you are learning, and making new drawings is still long and hard, but you need to build those muscles and pose out 20% than you are currently across the board.

21 (I Swear This Is The Last One). You probably need to widen your camera some. 'Field' is an old leftover term from the days of traditional animation on paper. You would have a field guide that... this is gonna get complicated to type out... long story short, it was a guide to let the camera know how close or far away it (the camera) needed to be from the drawings—the higher the number, the more pulled out the camera is. When someone says 'Field Out', they mean go wider. Obviously the reverse it true of 'Field In'. More importantly the point, students tend to be in way too close because it is easier to draw in close-ups than wider. Please field out/widen just a little more throughout all your boards. Look for storyboard templates that have 'Action Safe' and 'Text Safe' guides on them. All action needs to be

within the action safe area, while all text... you're smart you figure that out. Storyboard Pro has those options and they are great. Use them!!

21 (Psyche, Fooled You). 2/3 Grid. A lot of cinema uses certain screen divisions to help get a more appealing composition quicker and easier. The most used method is to divide the screen into thirds. Whenever possible (not all the time, but a good chunk of the time) try to put items on one of the thirds to give it visual authority. This division is pleasing to our eyes and is great way to instantly make your work look so much better.

22. Don't board 1 pose for an entire paragraph of dialogue. Phrase it out. For God's sake if you are holding a talking character's pose in the same pose for an entire paragraph of a giant exposition dump, congratulations, you are a board artist from the 1980's... but that won't help you 40 years later. Please don't animate everything out, but at least give a new pose for every phrase of the dialogue involved. (HA! I making you have to rely on your public school english education of what a phrase is!)

22.55 Use Speaker Deck or some other equivalent to show your pdfs. Please don't hate me and my colleagues. I don't want to scroll down through your forever non-ending pdf. I don't want to see a giant grid of panels where each panel is too small, but the overall is huge. I don't to look at your 3 panel layout board. I can follow all these things, but I have a lot going on in my day, and the brain power needed to follow this—while critiquing your work—is more than I want to spend. Have mercy and make it easy to just click through a board.

22.59 . Don't post an animatic unless you think you have awesome fucking timing. I don't mean to be rude, but I and my fellow colleagues have a lot going on in our days and we may not have time to look through your five minute animatic—why is it always 5 minutes minimum?! We definitely don't have time for a badly timed five minute animatic. In fact if it is badly timed, it will makes us angry for wasting that time, and likely get turned off within the first 30 seconds. Imagine that the person you are showing your work to has to look at 30 other boards that day. As a professional, we know in the first few shots if you have it or not, so cut us a break an helps get to that point sooner than later—don't make us have to wait through your slow ass animatic to figure it out. If we like your work, we'll look through more of it as a treat to ourselves.

22C. When drawing a BG in your boards, pick a landmark. You don't (AND SHOULDN'T) be drawing super complex BGs in your boards—unless you are insane, bored, or ahead of schedule. Outside of a grid, a helpful tip is to pick a landmark in the location of your scene and track where that landmark is in relation to where everyone involved is to get clear sense of the geography. Say for example you are in the sewers and there is one vertical pipe in the area. Track that landmark to let the audience know whether a character is closer or farther away from that item. Make sure not to forget wide shots with the landmark from time to time to really help the audience know the layout of the location.

23. Strategy 1: Draw clear simple BGS, and super rough figures. This is an approach a great board partner of mine introduced to me, while I don't always use this strategy, I want to pass it on as you usually use a bg quite a bit, but characters are always moving—rather smart.

24. Strategy 2: Draw super rough BGS, but clear figures. It's simply the reversal. This tends to be how I approach boards as I don't know what I'm doing with backgrounds a lot of the times. A grid counts as a super rough BG for sure. (but don't forget your landmark as mentioned above to help with geographical relationships!)

25. Only draw a nice BG when the focus of the shot is the BG. Self explanatory. (I get a high-five for simplicity)

25 7/8. Watch your eye direction! Have the character actually looking at what they are looking at. When characters are looking at each other, have their eyes actually meet. Don't just draw a pupil and move on, cause you'll drive directors nuts, and revisionists will curse your name as they are fixing the most easily fixable thing on the storyboard planet.

26. Try acting out the dialogue yourself. How would you do it? Draw that! Need to record that with your camera? Do it and draw that! Don't be ashamed, we all do it. Act it out! Act it out! Act it out! Make it authentic and not cliche'.

26A. Steal like an artist. Don't be afraid to use reference. Marc Davis once said that in animation can be done one of two ways: 1. The hard way, or 2. The harder way. Whenever possible, he tried to pick just the hard way. Grabbing reference from pictures, movies, or whatever is the a great way to help you meet your deadline. Some shots in animation are directly taken from shots in other movies or animation. Sometimes you are asked for too fast of a turnaround to do it all on your own. Steal from great stuff as long as it doesn't look obvious that that is what you did (the making it not obvious is the artistic part of the act).

27. Pick your battles for Thumbnails. For thumbnails, be concerned with how a character enters a scene, where they stop, where they are in location the other characters, and that's it. Save the acting for your roughs or finals. Thumbnails should be about geography and composition in a practical and functional manner that is interesting to look at.

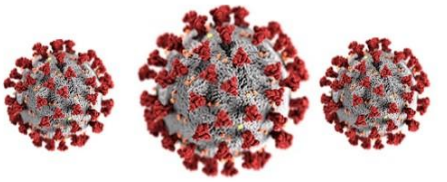
28. Don't forget to tilt the camera during an action scene. This one really is magic. Tilt the camera to taste in an action scene and watch how much more intense your work is. Don't overdo it, but watch your favorite action cartoons to see how much they use this trick. (Remember to watch without sound when studying.)

28.1. Cuts and camera movement should be motivated. Whether by someone looking, someone is talking off screen, a noise happens, someone enters the shot, a dialogue addresses someone, or whatever else you can think of, try to motivate your cuts and/or camera movements as much as possible by a motivating factor. This will add to the flow of cutting that I mentioned earlier (Tip # 19 9/10).

28.2. Everything decision you make should be in service of the story, not what is cool. If it have to explain it further, you're not getting it and think about this one and only this one until you do.

28 & 1/2. Make it fun. At the end of the day, whether you are doing a comedy or drama, action or metaphorical, it needs to be worth your audiences time. This doesn't mean you have to make vapid shallow material lacking a message. You can educate, you can inspire, and you can debate, but make it worth the time for your audience to do so and listen to you. An old saying my mom used to tell me is, "You attract more flies with honey than you do vinegar."

Newsletter for Very Late
Winter 2021



Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is a blend of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2021 – including Ani-Jam's, Bi-monthly virtual "coffee breaks," and the annual retreat!

ASIFA Central Board

President and IAD Multiverse Traveler
Brad Yarhouse

Secretary of Unfocused Distractions, Insolent Lymphoma, and Cracked Fonts
Jim Middleton

Coordinator for Membership, German Translations, and Technological Phenomena
Charles Wilson

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and Free Range Chickens
Deanna Morse

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Multiplanar Pies
Christopher Sagovac

Interlocutor of Projects, Feline Friskiness, and Public Works
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando ***WITH THE BEST BASEMENT IN THE MIDWEST***
Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge
Steve Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Robert Swieringa

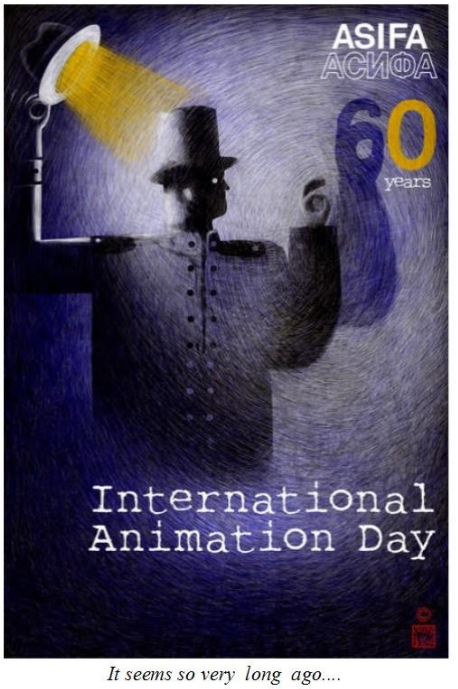
Stopped Motionator, Rocket launch monitor, and Tripod Convergence Coordinator
Gary Schwartz

International Animation Day, 2020:

Spiritus Mundi: Animating the World - R. Brad Yarhouse, President, ASIFA Central

2020 marked the 60th anniversary of ASIFA. Each year on October 28th, ASIFA celebrates the birth of animation recognized as the first public performance of projected moving images: Emile Reynaud's Theatre Optique in Paris, on the 28th of October, 1892.

This year, as part of International Animation Day, we asked each chapter and our partners to create up to a 2 minute animated story that gives us some insight about what makes them unique, what is significant for them as people of their region, culture, land, and language. Each chapter or partner organization that participated this year decided how their segment of the film will be created and what they wish to communicate about themselves.



It seems so very long ago....

The combined film was called *Spiritus Mundi: Animating the World*, a title inspired by W.B. Yeats who saw Spiritus Mundi as the world spirit that provides inspiration to the poet or writer.

The film made its debut on October 28th, 2020 to coincide with International Animation Day. The event will streamed on a YouTube channel with chat available for comments and well wishes. Coordinators, board members, animators and other guests were part of the celebration that then streamed out to YouTube for anyone to watch. It was a moment to speak about ASIFA as an international body. We shared stories and expressed our good wishes about the 60th anniversary. In this era of growing hate and prejudice, ASIFA as a multicultural, multinational, network of artists has the untapped potential for communicating about our shared humanity. As founder member John Halas stated, "we consider animation as a universal expression which is capable of immense contribution if given a chance."

ASIFA has over 40 chapters throughout the world supporting professional animators with a diversity of social economic backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, ages, and political systems. The ASIFA chapters involved in the 2020 Spiritus Mundi included Australia, BIH (Bosna, Hercegovinia), Egypt, Finland, Hellas, Iran, India, Lithuania, Switzerland, and ASIFA USA chapters Central, East, and South.

Spiritus Mundi: Animating the World was also highlighted at a number of International Animation Day Showings including Paris and Tehran.

In creating this film we were interested in exploring ways that we can bring awareness not only to our 60th anniversary but "help to promote progress towards peace and mutual understanding between all people," as stated in our ASIFA statutes preamble.

(Adapted from the press release of September, 2020)

The IAD 2020 report from ASIFA/Central USA

Deanna Morse, ASIFA/Central treasurer, Vice President, ASIFA International

We were able to have a successful "At Home ASIFA/Central Pandemic Celebration IAD 2020," despite some challenges.

We created an on-line program, password protected on Vimeo, with 19 films representing all of the countries that offered work this year for the celebration.

Using the film freeway platform, we reviewed titles and selected films. We wrote to the filmmakers for permission to download, if needed. (In some cases, we did not receive a response, so we had to cut those films from our proposed program.)

Three people worked on the selection, title design and edit, Jim Middleton, Deanna Morse (me) and Jim Schaub.

We contacted all the included filmmakers and thanked them, and provided them the password and screening link. We required our ASIFA/Central members to request the link for screening.

Result:

We created a program of films, with images and a short description.

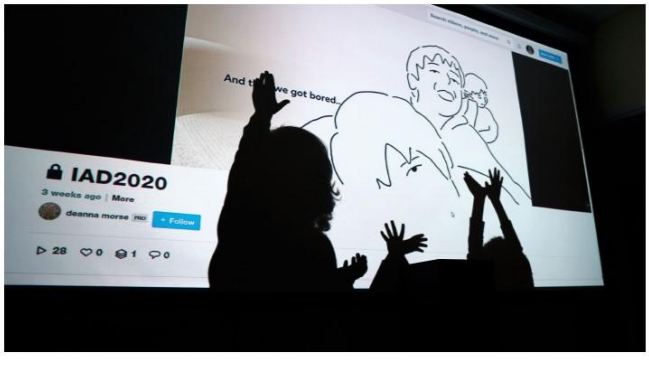
From Vimeo analytics, we know this IAD screening had a minimum of 32 views. Assuming at least 2 people per household, a minimum of 64 people participated.

The Future:

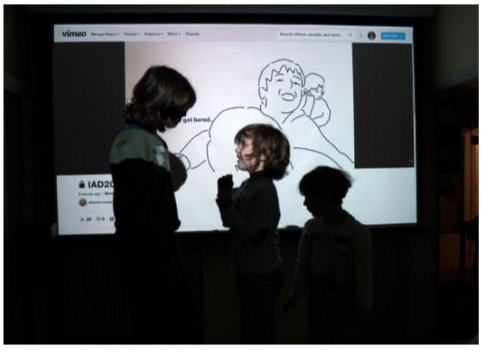
I think if I were to do it again in lock-down, I would offer the screening link more freely. But, it is not the number of people who taste an opportunity that counts. If this experience only touches one person deeply, and provides a context for considering our shared humanity, that is enough. The purpose of IAD is to celebrate our shared global connection, through our love of the art of animation. And, from feedback after the virtual event, I believe we were successful in that goal.

OK. You always want to make a change afterwards. Well, technically, I would have added some sound effect applause in between the films, to make it feel more like an in-person screening, a celebration. And, it would have been good to have a ZOOM with filmmakers to connect with each other.

However, I am just glad that we were able to pull this off. Happy IAD! We celebrate the diversity and richness of international animation. This year, 2021, no pandemic, we hope.



Zina Papadopoulou from Helas (Greece) provided photos of herself and her two children watching the screening.



Deanna Morse continues to recover from reviewing over 600 films for her part of this year's Academy Award (tm) membership vote. Sworn to secrecy, she did reveal that some the films were in color and a few entries involved certain familiar aspects of an art known as animation.

A 1912 one-off comic strip by Winsor McCay, from *The Battle Creek Moon Journal*

From the Department of International Poetics:

Dein roter Mund (Your Red Mouth)

Your red mouth is a crimson gate,
the multitude of words sounds so bright and happy.
And if the word were full of exuberance -
when you say it, everything goes bright and good.

Because every word flinches so, whether it knows,
that your red lips kissed it;
and every week a happy feast
when thundering it releases [from] your beautiful mouth.

Poem by Gustav Hochstetter (1873 - 1944)
Silhouette Illustration by Lotte Reiniger (1899 - 1981)
Originally published in *Venus en Seide*, 1919

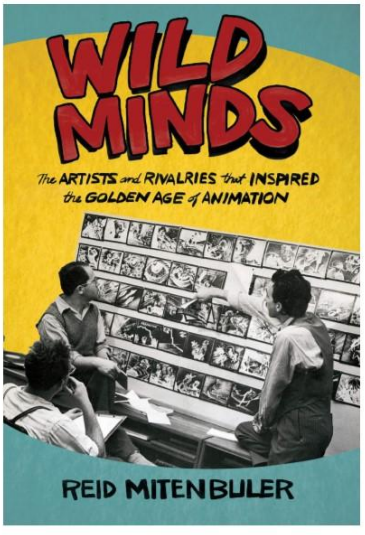
Translation by Charles Wilson, August 28, 2020

"Begone, you duffer!" - Winsor McCay 1925

Never Too Many Books Department:

Jim Middleton, Editor and Occasionally Accurate Typist

Wild Minds, by Reid Mitenbuler, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2020, $28, hardcover, 411 pages



While assembling a bibliography of animation books in the archives here, this untouched recent addition fell into my lap. Actually, it was onto my left foot. In any case, it got my attention.

Back in my educator days, I'd complete the semester on Media History by following the climax of *Anastasia* (1997) with Cohl's *Fantasmagorie* (1908) to demonstrate how far animation "industry" had developed - or, in an even tighter time frame, *Skeleton Dance* (1929) followed by the "Night on Bald Mountain" sequence of *Fantasia* (1940). *Or* tighter still, *Fantasmagorie* (still 1908) with *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914) to show the leap possible in just six years between two individual artists.

The many biographies of Disney, the masterful review of McCay's life by John Canemaker, the warm reflection of the life of Walter Lantz by Joe Adamson, the Fleischer tales by Leslie Cabarga and Ray Pointer - they all give insights to the individual lives and struggles of the craftsmen and creators of the animated worlds we enjoy, but a one-source guide that sweeps along the first century of the development of animation remains a welcome addition to the bookshelf. Also, enough time has passed where some of the more unsavory tales along the way can be related, along with the friction among personalities that have percolated into legendary anecdotes.

It always seemed that the Fleischer brothers suffered from an excess of comfort. They began by earnest effort, diligent exploration, but until things started falling apart rapidly in the late 1930s, were never truly "hungry." There was Bray as a distributor, then Paramount, and a lot of pre-code resources to help market their product. Disney began as a literal struggling artist, and when success was finally in reach, was outmaneuvered by distributors almost immediately, ever-after kept on the alert while redoubling his efforts to create a better entertainment experience. Cohl and McCay had to wait over a generation after their passing to be "rediscovered'; ultimately, even the Fleischers became vague memories until television syndication brought recognition. And behind them all percolated the denizens of Warner Brothers' "termite terrace," perpetrating subversion with Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck.

This is a lot of material to discuss in a 411 page book. Reid Mitenbuler even takes time to analyze the metamorphosis of Disney's wardrobe as he evolved into the TV persona of "Uncle Walt."

Wild Minds joins the shelf along with Maltin's *Of Mice and Magic* and Michael Barrier's *Hollywood Cartoons* as a good introductory reference for fans, educators, and students.

There is a wonderful 48 minute interview with Reid Mitenbuler by Jerry Beck on youtube - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TW11LCDKJt4

Upcoming Festivals - burn that bandwidth!

59TH ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL

Online March 23-28, 2021
Experimental film festival bending minds since 1963

https://www.annarborfilmfest.org - *March 23 - 28, 2021*

https://www.itfs.de/en/ - *online May 3 - 16, 2021*

https://www.annecy.org/home

Online presence for all - save the travel expense! Annoy your credit card by trading in Euros! The Ann Arbor Film Festival this year will feature the amazing contributions of ASIFA Central members Christine Veras and Steve Leeper, in "Animation Connections," Saturday March 27 at 12:45pm, EST.

The next issue of the ASIFA Central newsletter will feature fun discussions from our many CoVid-inspired ZOOM coffee breaks, hosted by the techno-savvy Michael Long, who communicates with everyone *from a different time zone.* Now when Daylight Savings pays interest in March, that's nearly as good as time travel!

Another one-off McCay strip from 1912

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) Springtime 2021 https://asifa.org/ *And* https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral/

A personal note of thanks to members of ASIFA Central and the many friends who offered support, stuffed animals, balloons, and words of encouragement during my six month ordeal with The Turquoise Ceramic Ball and other unexpected aspects of an unexpected diagnosis of The Big C. 20 weeks of tests and chemotherapy later, and the prognosis is very good. My sincere apologies for the silence from this keyboard in the meantime, for which I hope to make amends. Or at least, add clutter to the USPS delivery systems. As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com ...

ASIFA Central

Newsletter for
SPRING 2021

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is a blend of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2021 – including this special ZOOM COFFEE BREAK EDITION

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Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Multiplanar Pies
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Interlocutor of Projects, Feline Friskiness, and Public Works
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando ***WITH THE BEST BASEMENT IN THE MIDWEST***
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Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge
Steven Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Robert Swieringa

Stopped Motionator, Rocket launch monitor, and Tripod Convergence Coordinator
Gary Schwartz

TIME TO ZOOm!

The ZOOM Coffee Break Experience - *Deanna Morse and Jim Middleton*

"Zoom" is derived from the Middle Dutch *sôom*, or from the Old Dutch *som*, or from Proto-West Germanic *saum*, or from the Proto-Germanic *saumaz*, which means something that has been sewn. Sew there. This means that you had best attend to any holes in your socks, especially in Germany or the Netherlands. Great War aviators used "zoom" to describe getting closer, quickly, and by the mid-1930s, the "zoomar" lens was contracted to the "zoom" lens, to the delight of subsequent producers of MTV videos.

[This is such a slow explanation for a word that means zippety-do-dah fast (which, as any fan of the Great Carsoni may remember, is what you do when you leave your do-dah open, but this is a family newsletter, after all).]

UPA Coffee Discussion - August 2020

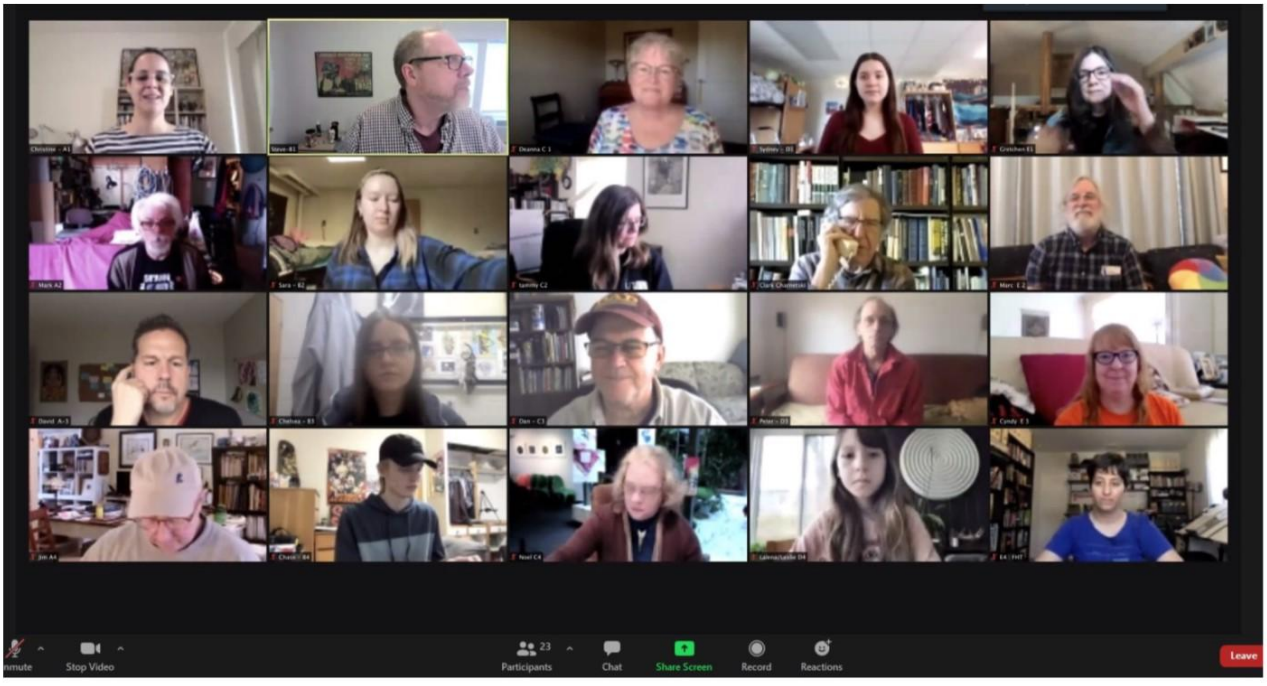
Since CoVid. Zoom has become synonymous with Pantsless Internet Meetings (PIMs), and the ASIFA Central board has been making monthly use of them, to the delight of at-large and long-range members, and to the chagrin of neglected gas stations. Christine Veras Martin and Steven Leeper began building experimental *anizoomation* since last year (popularized on the Book of Faces by Deanna Morse, be sure to "like" that page) and more recently, during the 59th Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Every month, ASIFA/Central members and friends gather on ZOOM around our virtual coffee pot to swap stories, show work in progress, talk about books, films, animation history… and whatever else we feel like.

These coffee breaks are a natural extension of our many PIMs when creating the 2020 IAD AniJam. We had so much fun seeing each other regularly that we wanted to continue connecting. These have been hosted by the master of foils, flunge, and magic, Michael Long from Webster University, blocks from The Gateway Arch in St. Louis. We are inviting others to join these chit chat meetings. Coffee isn't mandatory, but it does keep things moving.

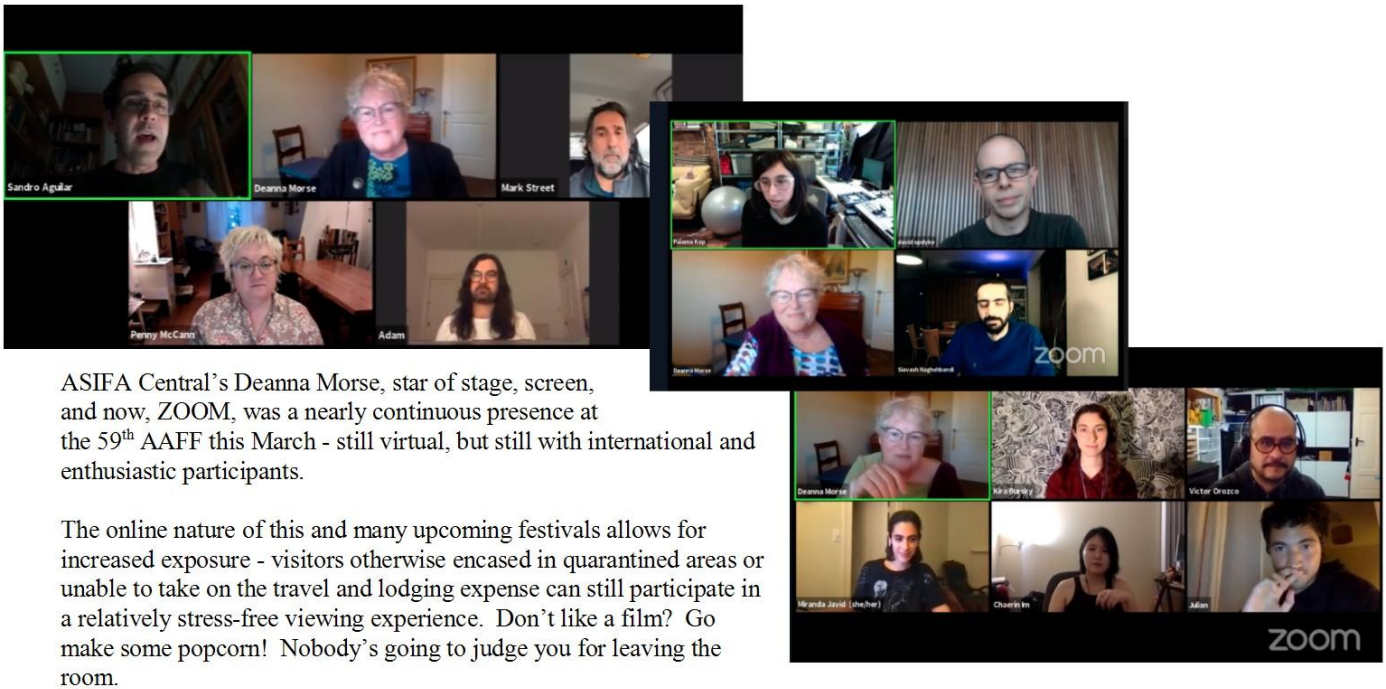
If you are interested in getting on the invitation list and sharing some watercoolor-java talk, please contact Michael at: michaellonglong@hotmail.com

Speaking of *Anizoomation*, Christine Veras Martin and Steven Leeper's workshop at the Ann Arbor Film Festival was well attended and received, as documented in the screenshot entitled "20 Animators In Search of an Exposure Sheet" – better living through post-it notes and blue objects.



And Speaking of Ann Arbor and Zooming:

Deanna Morse Defines Ubiquity at the 59th Ann Arbor Film Festival



ASIFA Central's Deanna Morse, star of stage, screen, and now, ZOOM, was a nearly continuous presence at the 59th AAFF this March - still virtual, but still with international and enthusiastic participants.

The online nature of this and many upcoming festivals allows for increased exposure - visitors otherwise encased in quarantined areas or unable to take on the travel and lodging expense can still participate in a relatively stress-free viewing experience. Don't like a film? Go make some popcorn! Nobody's going to judge you for leaving the room.

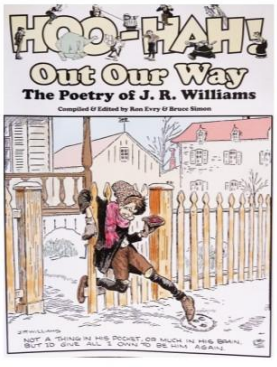
This year's festival had a heavy animation presence, and the studied and steadied discipline of creating animation helped create some of the strongest entries among the many films. Even extended documentaries such as *The Annotated Field Guide to Ulysses S. Grant* included animated sequences. There was a sense of nostalgia in many of the entries this year, with either mid-1980s style CGI or frequent use of distressed film, either by source or post-production.

Deanna brought together filmmakers for the post-showing Q and A and coaxed production methods and some performance techniques, while fielding incoming viewer questions in the Zoom platform.

Don't forget the upcoming online festivals for Annecy https://www.annecy.org/home - *online June 14 - 19, 2021*
and Stuttgart - https://www.itfs.de/en/ - *online May 3 - 16, 2021*

Upcoming 2021 Midwest Animator's Summer Retreat
Also, keep your eyes out for information on our Annual ASIFA/Central Midwest Animator's Retreat, which will happen late summer 2021. Virtual this year, again. There is a committee huddling together, working on ideas, and it looks exciting, as usual.

Hoo-Hah! - A Comic Compilation Magazine



A pet project of Ron Ervy and Bruce Simon, *Hoo Hah!* gets its name from an early entry in the *MAD Magazine* world in its celebration of comic strips of the early 20th century. The current run from Amazon press focuses on the series by J. R. Williams, *Out Our Way,* which was already a look backward when it first appeared in 1922, and even more so with its 60 year run in many newspapers, back when newspapers used to run comic strips. In a single panel format, Williams managed to convey the mood and even the poetry of bygone eras, with a fondness for characters of the wild west. Many of the panels were redrawn from source material found on archival microfilm. It's a great source of inspiration for storyboard composition.

Everything begins with Mad Magazine

Women in Animation Department - with Chuck Wilson
The poem from *Venus en Seide* (1919) titled "I Want You" features a larger, one-page silhouette illustration created by Lotte Reiniger.

My yearning breaks all walls and dimensions:
I want you! You!
My longing must endure life and time,
I want you! You!

And rocks pile up between us two -
I want you! (emphatically)
And I can forgive those who forgive your sins,
I want you! (emphatically)

My yearning does not flag at borders nor barriers,
I want you! You!
I mark this in the heart and in your thoughts:
"I want you! You!"

And I stumble, my yearning still called out of the grave:
"I want you! You!"
But I want to live, so I have you!
I want you! You!

Poem by Gustav Hochstetter (1873 - 1944), Silhouette Illustration by Lotte Reiniger (1899 - 1981), Translation by Charles Wilson, February 22, 2018
For more backstories and accomplishments by women in animation, check out Chuck Wilson's *Smudge Animation* blog, where this particular sequence can be found at:
http://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com/2021/03/animated-women-i-want-you.html

The Criterion Channel is offering up a rather thorough listing of Lotte Reiniger films in its April broadcast schedule.

https://criterioncast.com/news/april-2021-programming-on-the-criterion-channel-announced

In cluding her feature film, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, 1926
and the shorts
The Secret of the Marquise, 1922
The Flying Coffer, 1922
Dr. Dolittle: A Trip to Africa, 1923
Dr. Dolittle: The Lion's Den, 1923
Harlequin, 1931
The Stolen Heart, 1934
Papageno, 1935
The Magic Horse, 1953
Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, 1954
The Caliph Stork, 1954
The Star of Bethlehem, 1956
The Lost Son, 1974

And, rounding up Women's Month in March, and as part of our ongoing promotion of Public Domain material, comes this rather sad tale about a graphic designer and overlooked influence on occult imagery:

Pamela "Pixie" Colman Smith secured her place in the history of Western esoterica in 1909, after she was commissioned to illustrate a new tarot deck by the author and mystic A.E. Waite. The illustrations were instantly iconic upon release, and their popularity was greatly bolstered by Waite's failure to copyright the work in the United States. Now in the public domain, her cards were widely circulated in reprint and re-purposed for other graphic projects. The Waite-Rider tarot style became a stock image of the esoteric and occult in the 20th century.

Before this, Smith began as an illustrator with projects involving William Butler Yeats and Bram Stoker, who had completed a book on the actress Ellen Terry. Smith supported the struggle for women's right to vote in Britain and donated her services for poster designs and toys for the Red Cross during World War I.

In 1903, Smith launched her own arts-and-crafts style magazine called *The Green Sheaf*, which lasted only13 issues. *These beautiful examples are assembled online at archive.org.*

"Pixie" Smith, ca 1912

In 1907, photographer Alfred Stieglitz gave an exhibition her paintings in New York at his gallery, generally devoted solely to the photographic avant-garde. Stieglitz was intrigued by Smith's painted visions that came to her while listening to music. The show was successful enough that Stieglitz issued a platinum print portfolio of 22 of her paintings. The Smith paintings that did not sell eventually wound up in the Stieglitz/O'Keeffe Archive at Yale.

Although she continued writing and illustrating, after the 1930s Smith was unable to find publishers, possibly (and inexplicably) due to "changes in public taste." Smith died in her British apartment in 1951, apparently alone, and her possessions were auctioned off to pay her debts. It is likely she was buried in a nearby unmarked grave. Please celebrate Pixie's memory with a Tarot reading and an afternoon with *The Green Sheaf.* *(Wikipedia and archive.org)*

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) Springtime 2021 - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org
And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION
As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ASIFA Central

Newsletter for
(Later) SPRING 2021

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is a blend of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2021

ASIFA Central Board

President and IAD Multiverse Traveler
Brad Yarhouse

Secretary of Unfocused Distractions, Insolent Lymphoma, and Cracked Fonts
Jim Middleton

Coordinator for Membership, German Translations, and Technological Phenomena
Charles Wilson

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and Anizoomation
Deanna Morse

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Multiplanar Pies
Christopher Sagovac

Interlocutor of Projects, Feline Friskiness, and Public Works
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando ***WITH THE BEST BASEMENT IN THE MIDWEST***
Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge
Steven Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Robert Swieringa

Stopped Motionator, Rocket launch monitor, and Tripod Convergence Coordinator
Gary Schwartz

Random sketches in this issue by Lotte Reiniger, Pamela Colman Smith, and contributors to The Pleaides (1910)

THE ASIFA CENTRAL SUMMER RETREAT APPROACHETH!

Friday, July 16 through Sunday, July 18, 2021 (AD)

Plans for a Virtual Experience Moving Apace
Update Your Email or Get Egg on Your Face

ASIFA Central Board Update

The past several meetings have centered around plans for the upcoming summer retreat, with prospective speakers, technological issues, projects and programs. The ASIFA Central website (www.asifa.org) is being expanded to include links from member and group animation projects, archival photos of earlier retreats, and newsletter scans old enough to have grandchildren. Membership continues in the 30-40 range, the treasury is solvent, and Our President R. Brad Yarhouse is reaching out to members to circulate through the board as the election approaches this summer.

Details of the summer retreat will appear soon!

Well-Read Zoomers - *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain: In Which Four Russians Give a Master Class on Writing, Reading, and Life* by George Saunders

From Penguin Press-Random House: *"For the last twenty years, George Saunders has been teaching a class on the Russian short story to his MFA students at Syracuse University. In A Swim in a Pond in the Rain, he shares a version of that class with us, offering some of what he and his students have discovered together over the years. Paired with iconic short stories by Chekhov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Gogol, the seven essays in this book are intended for anyone interested in how fiction works and why it's more relevant than ever in these turbulent times."* - It turns out that it was a pretty popular book among ASIFA Central Zoomers.

Our 48 Minutes of Fame in Australia - *Major Awards, labeled "Fra-gee-lay."*

"Dancing Bear is *where?"*

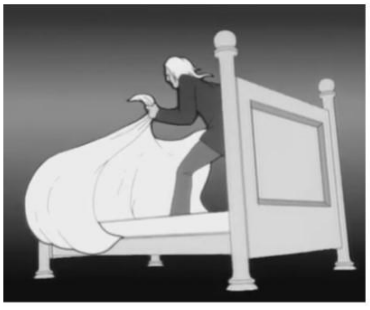
Four ASIFA Central members had a brief brush with down-under recognition from a misdirected email from the AniMate Animation Festival. Originally, it indicated that their Film Freeway submissions had been selected for showing, but a few (48) minutes later, an email corrected this apparent ubersight. Nevertheless, there were recognitions posted for the contributors:

Deanna Morse - *Recipe for Birds* - nominee
Melissa Bouwman - *Connecting* - finalist
Brad Yarhouse - *I Carry the Sun* - quarter-finalist
Jim Middleton - *Compilation 2020* (including *Waiting at the Church*, a separate entry) - semi-finalist

The members celebrated their recognition with a Vegemite sandwich while admiring photos of Captain Kangaroo. (We note that the AniMate festival in Australia is a volunteer-run and amazing celebration of the international scope of animation. We're appreciative of their industry and management of many successful festivals, but comforted in knowing we're not the only ones to prematurely, and accidently, press "send" on occasion.)

Little Nemo in Pop Music

A discussion of Nemo during an early April Zoom experience brought back memories of Genesis' *Scenes from a Night's Dream* from their album, "And Then There Were Three" (1978), and Tom Petty's music video *Running Down a Dream* (1993), with some familiar images incorporating the singer into a Winsor McCay universe. 1993: that was a quick 28 years. Whoosh!



Chuck Wilson's Germanic Corner

Here is Gustav Hochstetter's *Your Little Ear* with its accompanying illustration by Lotte Reiniger. I'd like to thank everyone for visiting the *Smudge Animation* blog to appreciate a little poetry and art from 1919 and for your patience with my imperfect translations. For those who are interested in this subject and would like to read more of Hochstetter's poems with an accompanying silhouette illustration, see the blog post from a presentation given at ASIFA Central in 2018 *(http://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com/2018/09/animated-thoughts-asifa-central-retreat.html)*. There I cover a little about Hochstetter and Lotte's history, the translation process, and the poem *One Must be the Most Beautiful*.

Your Little Ear

Your little ear, the ultimate jewel,
Has no place for regulations nor orders.
Entry is strictly forbidden to the nobles;
Your ear hears what it likes to hear.

And yet it opens up the very best round
So nice and kind to my mouth:
For wishes, sparkling like champagne foam,
There is room for a thousand kisses.

Poem by Gustav Hochstetter (1873 - 1944), Silhouette Illustration by Lotte Reiniger (1899 - 1981), Originally published in *Venus en Seide*, 1919, Translation by Charles Wilson, August 28, 2020

Festivals - Panels of GLAS – Recruiters and Production -Notes typed by Jim Middleton

GLAS 2021

Panel One: How to Get the Gig

Brooke Keesling - VP - ASIFA Hollywood, Bento Box
Camille Eden - Nickelodeon - Development and Outreach
Chris Leahy - Sony Pictures Animation - Preproduction Pipeline
Camille Leganza - Netflix Animation - Story and Director Position Recruiter
Robin Linn - Activision - 32 years in the business - gaming
Terrence Masson - SVA (School of Visual Arts) - moderator

In comparing the two panel discussions that were part of the GLAS festival this April (5-16, www.glasanimation.com), it should be noted that the recruiters are the keepers of wisdom, with decades of experience among them. This makes perfect sense, since they must quickly detect guano on behalf of the companies they represent, and they have heard it all. In contrast, the ones who have to bring projects in from the outside are all a bit younger and filled with that level of enthusiasm seen in a new realtor who will invest in YOU to SUCCEED!! – with, of course, enough street experience so they, too, can detect the guano. (One suspects there's a lot of guano in film production. Could *Hail, Caesar!* have been a documentary?)

Regardless, what could have been a couple of dry discussions turned out to provide some of the high points of the GLAS festival, which already had many high points to begin with. These teams comprise a unique sodality in the profession - they know what is needed to produce an amazing film and can find the "daisies in the weeds" to get it accomplished. Brooke Keesling can even provide fiberglass hamburgers! And as if to prove their commitment, Allison at Sony has been sequestered in her garage during Covid, and Katie at Netflix is in true need of some books and posters for her garret office. (I'm thinking of starting a box. Hope she likes ViewMasters.)

The Notes, *How to Get the Gig*:
Recruiters have been in the business for decades, and are often only a degree or two away from having worked with each other. "We want to see the spark of the artist's own aesthetic."
There is a surge of interest in animation from recent graduates at a time when it is becoming harder to find experienced talent. They find that even experienced animators continue practicing their craft, especially if they have been associated with a long-term gig (ie *The Simpsons)*.

It's a great time to be a storyboard artist - they're needed in nearly every form of production, not just in animation.
Don't make a tame, safe portfolio. "I want something to scare me a little bit."
And of portfolios, keep it updated. "A red flag for me is getting a portfolio with the same material I saw in it six months ago."

After your initial encounter, only reach out to recruiters when you have new work to show them. Show that you have read their notes about your portfolio - address and correct any shortcomings that were noted, and then be thankful, not defensive, for their input.

Clean up and streamline your social media presence (better get rid of the *MySpace* account).

If you're wondering about pay scales, don't bring it up in the first encounter. See the Animation Guild site *(www.animationguild.org)* for pay rates. Some of them are pretty sweet.

Find and express something memorable about yourself - you must rise above hundreds of others - be a diamond among the lumps of coal.

If you have started a film, *FINISH IT*. Showing you can finish something is just as important as knowing the software. Network, network, network, and then mentor, mentor, mentor - once you are *in*, use your connections to *bring in* others. Show that you give as well as you take. Inspire tomorrow's animators. Your face could be on a stamp someday. (I heard they're going to require stamps on email someday - hey, I heard it on the internet, so it must be true.)

Don't get an MFA unless you plan to teach. A PhD in animation won't have your squash and stretch be any squashier or stretchier. In fact, it could be sclerosed.

Regional, identifiable animation styles are emerging with their international search for talent.
During a discussion, offer *critiques* instead of *opinions* about films or styles.

Follow recruiters on social media with your *art* accounts - they aren't really interested in your cat or vacation pictures. Create a unique social media account for your artwork - make it searchable - and provide your current contact information *everywhere*.

Get a proper email account (not a "4204ever" type) that is ideally just your name and a zipcode @whatever. *If it takes more than three clicks to access you or your art, you're passed over*. Have a friend try to find you on the internet, just to check. (Don't try to find yr hmbl typst on the internet, by the way - Google just sends you to my cousin Kate, and our families aren't talking these days)

The average first look at a portfolio is five to ten *seconds*. If you are trying to show off multiple talents, arrange them by discipline on your website, with separate tabs.

Have a blog? Get rid of it. "I'm so glad we are done with the Blog Era." It's so 2012 - and we all know the world ended that year and took every blog with it.

Make yourself and your art easily shareable - if you change your password access to your art, that's another click and another obstacle. And these folks *circulate*.

"If you have applied to us, we have your material." Recruiters cannot immediately respond and often review portfolios, not by the dozens, but by the hundreds.

"It's the community that we fall in love with, not the project." If you get the job, think where you'd want to be in three years. On the next project? It's nice to have an existing "family."

Recruiters are people, too. "Don't stalk us! Don't follow us into the bathroom! We all have horror stories."
Timing is important - you may not be applying when there is an opening in your particular field or expertise, but there may be an opening later. However, don't shotgun the jobs page, because they can see you are doing this.

"We've all been through the wringer at some point in our careers."
"The first job in the industry is often the hardest to get. One in, start networking, pull in others. Be nice."
"If you are not nice, you will be remembered for it."
Animation is a very competitive field now, in spite of the increased opportunities. Remember, "there are more professional football players than professional animators."

Be resilient and flexible - the market is always changing.

"We will judge you by your worst work." Edit out your "filler." Get proper feedback from people other than your partners and families.

Resumes are reviewed differently, depending on the job title - if it's an artistic position, they focus on the art and project, not necessarily the spelling. However, if it is in production or along a management path, your resume must be pristine.
Cover letters? Some read them, but the consensus is expressed with the statement, "I can't remember the last time I read a cover letter."

Don't say "email" is a software skill. That's just being silly. (Tell them you snail mail everything written with a quill and use four cent stamps. That may not help, either, but you'll be remembered.)

Tell them of your experience with *Harmony* (from ToonBoom), *Storyboard Pro* (also ToonBoom, includes sweet animatics), the *Hugo Suite* (for meeting organization), *Shotgun* (Adobe production tracking), or *Houdini* (node-based 3D procedural software for project sharing).

On your LinkedIn site, don't just say you worked at a studio. Say WHAT you worked ON at that studio. "You could have been a janitor for all we know." So don't tell them "Disney, 1937-1940," say "I brushed the blush on *Snow White* and curled Stokowski's hair for *Fantasia.*" It's just an example. It's late. I'm getting punchy.

Sometimes studios will use a temp service - sometimes, aspirants work their way into the pipeline in that manner. And sometimes aspirants just collect random stationery on the first day and are never heard from again. This is considered naughty behavior and is remembered.

Panel Two: Pitching the Project
Jelena Popovic - NFB - English division - Montreal
Allison Mann - Sony Pictures Animation - VP of Creative Strategies
Katie Mullin - Netflix - Feature Animation Creative Team
Asalie Tanha - Cartoon Network - Director of Development
Kari Kim - Nickelodeon - VP Development
Sean Buckelew - independent animator - GLAS programmer - moderator

The Notes, *Pitching the Project*:
When pitching the project, consider the studio - do your research! For example:
NFB - there are 11 sites across Canada, the productions are mostly short, auteur-driven, art-house directed films. "Art with a social purpose," not just a PSA. Cats in your office are allowed (Jelena had hers).
Nickelodeon - the current environment is that "The Old Nick" is "The New Nick." They're relaunching the 5 - 8 minute shorts directed at 6 to 11 year olds.
Netflix - feature animation, they're new! Netflix seeks a "4 quadrant audience." (Male/Female/Under 25/Over 25) They are most moved by personal, emotional stories. Watch *Klaus.*
Sony Pictures Animation - Features and television. They consider themselves "platform agnostic." Feature films are in the range of PG-13 to R, an "8 to 80" demographic as they evolve the medium. They want to move into the "big kid" and live action spaces of entertainment. "Why animated? Why *not* animated!" You'll hear birds chirping in the office. The sky's the limit, so bring a visual strategy, and expect tons of energy.
Cartoon Network - the 6 to 11 year old audience, and family space, while seeking independent voices

CARTOON NETWORK

When reaching out to make the pitch, the first thing is *whoa, thar, pardner!* Don't make the pitch in your first email. With your initial contact, indicate you have *something* to pitch (and please don't make it Sasquatch or cats. Really. They're up to their glottis is Sasquatchery and feline frolics). With pitches, you're treading onto legal territory. Unsolicited pitches are *not accepted, especially at festivals and ESPECIALLY when they're in the middle of a conversation with someone else.* You'll get entered into a release process, and *then* you get to make the pitch.

During that first pitch presentation, remember –

- to genuinely seek understanding the process, rather than focus on getting this brilliant idea of yours in front of them

- to be mindful and thoughtful as you engage with these gatekeepers who work to flesh out your idea

- that some studios (ie Netflix) do not have a particular style. Projects there are creator-driven, and they'll want to know how you plan to move through your production, and especially in the case of feature animation, whether you can persevere for up to three years of the production process; something develolped from a deep personal space will keep the creativity moving

- they want to know about you, what vision you can bring to the project, and that much comes to them by word-of-mouth in this tiny community of professionals

- some studios (ie Sony) want even the most far-fetched tale to have some grounding in reality - you may be talking aliens, but can you trace it to something set up by two brothers in 1994 Schenectady? Homework!

- to remove your own barriers for presenting your ideas - believe in manifestation (want to be a director? Then *direct! You're now a director!*) - don't wait to be "discovered." There was only one Lana Turner, and drug stores aren't what they used to be.

- that "doing the deal" is not instantaneous - it can take 2 to 30 months to get through the entire process, but along the way, you'll have support. If you're proposing a series, are you ready to outline 100 or more episodes? Can you create backstories for each of your characters? Remember - *The Simpsons* is in its 422nd season and has been renewed for another 422.

- to be flexible with the trends in the industry (remember when "Happy Tree Friends" and "Frog in a Blender" were pretty hot tickets at the dawn of the internet?)

A final note about the amazing NFB (National Film Board), aka ONF (Office National du Film) - They are unique in Canada, as they are public servants in this government-run public agency. Everything must be transparent there, everything is documented via email, and *any Canadian has access to this creative service.* (My favorite 1980s anecdote is that a Canadian could walk into an NFB retail store, request a film on VHS, and if they didn't have it on VHS, they'd find it in their national library, make a print from the stored negative if necessary, and then transfer it to VHS and send it off.) That doesn't mean automatic approval, but it makes it very nice to be Canadian. While up to 30% of the NFB productions are internationally co-produced, it is only with those countries who have signed treaties with Canada for co-productions. And of course, which North American country has *not* signed with Canada (or Mexico, for that matter) for this? Yeah, you know who. Nonetheless, they follow the basic What (synopsis), Why (the director's statement), and How (is this unique from a non-NFB project) of an initial pitch. *O, Canada!*

Inspirational quote from Nick Cross at GLAS:
"We're not going to pay you a lot for this, but we're giving you a ton of freedom."

(at least he wasn't told, "Think of all the great exposure!")

With Stuttgart and Annecy yet to come! Set your time machines to - Stuttgart - *https://www.itfs.de/en/ - online May 3 - 16, 2021* and Annecy *https://www.annecy.org/home - online June 14 - 19, 2021*

Shameless Self Promotion Department - Links and Projects of ASIFA Central Members

A New, Ongoing Feature

Steve Leeper

He has two sites for the surfers to enjoy - *www.jsleeper.com* (Featuring the best use of toast since Heywood Banks!) and his Br. Thomas film site - *The Temptation of Brother Thomas* – at *https://jsl-studio-animation.webnode.com/brotherthomasfilm/*

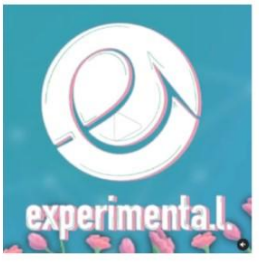
Artist's statement: *"I wrote the Br. Thomas Treatment back in 2002 but didn't really begin work on development until around 2010 when I picked up a grant from the Lily Foundation to complete the boards. This allowed me to bring Michael Spooner on for visual development. Then in 2015 I picked up the Emeritus Grant, combined with a sabbatical leave, and I was able to continue with picture development, animate three scenes and produce a short promotional teaser for the film. I've been pitching the film fairly consistently over the last two years and am currently working with the development folks at CMU to find a financial partner to help us start full, final production. My hope is to have the film completed by 2026."*

And YES! Steve is fully tenured at CMU as of March, 2021!

From Promotional Teaser Reel

Christine Veras Martin

I have created a new Experimental Animation Lab in my University called *experimenta.l.* Here is its page: *https://atec.utdallas.edu/content/experimental-animation-lab/*



We have a very active Instagram account*:* *https://www.instagram.com/experimental_animation_lab/*

And I have recently started curating articles about *Animation on Flipboard*, for the magnazine called ***Flickering News***: *https://flipboard.com/@christineveras/flickering-news-rleqpoocz?from=share&utm_source=flipboard&utm_medium=curator_share*

And the other site is called *Animation in Context* that I share with the UK professor Johny Byrne: *https://flipboard.com/@johnybyrne2020/animation-context-gun0kk5sz?from=share&utm_source=flipboard&utm_medium=curator_share*

Deanna Morse

Anizoomations and New Website - Deanna has reworked her Deanimation site, incorporating CoVid-ZOOM inspired stop motion exercises inspired by stopping all motion and Zooming during CoVid.

http://www.deanimations.com/services/ - includes the amazing award-winning film *Connecting* (2021) directed by, and with, Melissa Bouwman. Her namesake website continues apace, and there are always surprises waiting on her YouTube and Vimeo channels.

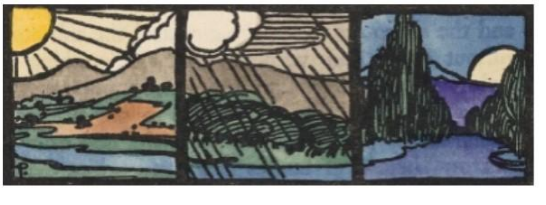
http://www.deannamorse.com/Site/home.html

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIDexYbQ8m4oKi-3-OSrDCg

https://vimeo.com/deannamorse

They're head-over-heels about animation!

But Wait!



There's MORE!

Chris Sagovac

Chris has a comics and animation solo show running now online and in the gallery. On exhibit now (since March 18) to May 14, 2021 with St. Louis Community College at Wildwood - Gallery of Contemporary Art - stlcc.edu - and https://stlcc.edu/campus-life-community/cultural-arts/art-galleries/wildwood-art-gallery/ww-chris-sagovac.aspx - featuring the "Stupendous! Fantastic!"* short film *Chanbaragogo*.
Chris Sagovac is an American independent cartoonist working in animation, comics and game art. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Media Communications from Webster University in 1997 and his Master of Arts in Studio Arts with emphasis in Alternative Media from Webster University in 2005.
* unsolicited testimonials

Gary Schwartz

"I see peepholes everwhere..."

The perpetually animated Mr.Schwartz has provided connections a pair of his recent films:
Carny Obscura -Stop-Motion film created in tandem with the 150th Anniversary of Cedar Point, Sandusky, Ohio. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-mUv0Ck6DE
The Crown Nobody Wanted - An Animated "exquisite corpse" video made by students at the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies in Yerevan, Armenia. The on-line production was taught from 5,876 miles away - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNhy897qAMU

Chris Sullivan

Chris continues to work on his ambitious feature *Orbit of Minor Satellites,* which is moving well for a 2022 release. It's remains a very Chicago film, both for actors and animators. Updates are at his website, https://orbitkickstart.com/

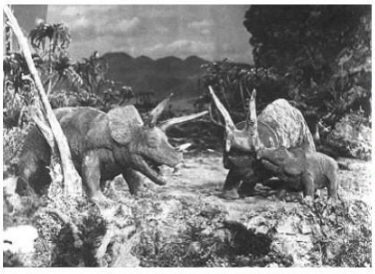
Public Domain Update - 1925 is up for GRABS

Discovery of the Month - *The Pleaides* from 1910 - at Project Gutenberg - https://www.gutenberg.org/files/56423/56423-h/56423-h.htm - a delightful and brief bit of printed ephemera, with poetry and watercolors and Art Nouveau

"The awfullest thing that ever yet wuz " - from the Pleaides of 1910

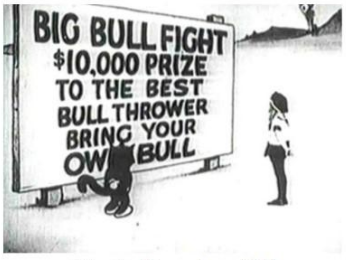
1925 Animation - *Alice the Toreador* - the PD version is at Youtube - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEn6a_TjGC4 and *Alice Solves the Puzzle* - the PD version at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-jqH_oAyWI (do not, I repeat *do not* use any "Alice" that has been repurposed by the Disney company. They create a slightly different version of the original, with different aperture framing and a new soundtrack, thereby creating a "new copyright" on a PD product).

The Public Domain Update *Continues* - *still with 1925*



The Lost World - 1925

The Lost World - Willis O'Brien stop motion - PD version at - *https://www.publicdomainreview.org/collection/the-lost-world-1925*

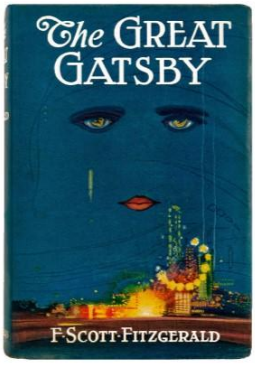


Alice the Toreador - 1925

Felix Trifles With Time - 1925

Felix the Cat - examples from 1924-25 at - *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b95azHKrUwY*

And for another film version of *The Great Gatsby*, perhaps this can be the year for someone to *finally* do it right!



And, finally, 93-year old Tom Lehrer has opened up his entire song catalogue for use in the public domain. Here is his statement on www.tomlehrersongs.com *His songs cry out to be animated!*

I, Tom Lehrer, and the Tom Lehrer Trust 2000, hereby grant the following permission:

All the lyrics on this website, whether published or unpublished, copyrighted or uncopyrighted, may be downloaded and used in any manner whatsoever, without requiring any further permission from me or any payment to me or to anyone else.

Some lyrics written by me to copyrighted music by others are included herein, but of course such music may not be used without permission of the copyright owners. (The translated songs may be found in their original languages on YouTube.)

The music of all the songs on this website that were written by me may also be downloaded and used as described above.

In other words, all the lyrics herein and all the music herein that was written by me should be treated as though they were in the public domain.

In particular, permission is hereby granted to anyone to set any of these lyrics to their own music and publish or perform their versions or parodies or distortions of these lyrics without fear of legal action.

(There is no legal way to unilaterally transfer a song into the public domain, so this disclaimer is intended as an end run around the copyright laws.)

Note: This website will be shut down on December 31, 2024, so if you want to download anything, don't wait too long.

If you are unfamiliar with the satiric genius of Tom Lehrer, check him out on YouTube. After 35 years of practice, your humble typist *almost* knows the entire "Elements Song."

And, in case you've been sleeping well lately, a reminder that Love Death + Robots Vol. 2 debuts on Netflix May 14.

Profiles in Animation: Michael Long

The monthly host of our coffee break Zoom meetings has some mad skills

The dapper master of men's minds

When a resume includes magic, fencing, and animation, one can presume a rapier-like wit. With experimentation in cinema magic without knowing about Georges Melies, or stop motion with 8mm - regular 8mm - film without the benefit of a single frame button, one can presume a healthy combination of imagination with a nascent understanding of mechanics. And when one can prompt the random comment from Tom Lehrer of, "Ah, as time passes, the more I find myself living in the subjunctive," an easy presumption can be made of a truly unique life, well lived.

The collegiate man of mystery

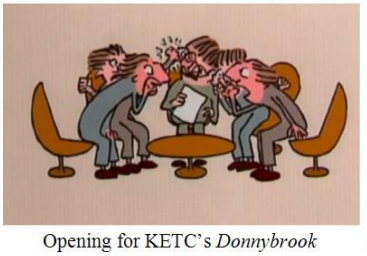
So it is with Michael Long, An assistant professor of the Electronic and Photographic Media Department at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, where he both attended and now serves, Michael continues to distinguish himself across several disciplines, any one of which could qualify as a full-time distraction of the work-a-day whorl'd that surrounds us.

In addition to all this, he advises 27 animation students and serves on multiple committees and task forces at Webster - and contributes to ASIFA Central film projects, *and* hosts a monthly series of Zoom "coffee breaks," open to our chapter members, where discussions range from UPA styles to Russian short stories.

He has Type O Emulsion

In the late 70s, a time when animation was often a self-taught or studio trained discipline, Michael was able to build his own animation stand, learn the basics from a fellow student and animation instructor Carl Willat at Santa Cruz, and then return to St. Louis to split his time between a local animation studio while assistant managing a local movie theater. *ET* turned theater management into a huge part of his life, so animation had to take on an "independent" status. A guest lecture led to an artist-in-residency to teach animation to elementary school throughout Missouri, and ultimately, a position at Webster, where he has served as *spiritus loci* ever since. When not training students who have gone on to work at Disney, Bento Box, and Insomniac Games, Michael continues to create short films, whether for KETC TV's regional chat show *Donnybrook,* or, with ASIFA Central in "Potluck" and ASIFA Hellas' "Happy New Year 2021!" His current independent work-in-progress, *Island Hopping,* should be ready later this year.

Dressed for Fencing or Surgery - with Stefan Stratil of Vienna



Opening for KETC's *Donnybrook*

His use of magic ties in well with his teaching style (animation *is* magic, after all), and Michael's interest in fencing began as high school drama training. That grew under the guidance of world champion foilist Charles Selberg, who taught him how to see things in motion, observe himself and others, and practice deception with fake actions (again, like animation, creating an illusion). He now teaches it as a one-credit class at Webster, "more as a zen martial art, but I disguise it as a sport."

Conversations come easily during our Zoom discussions, with no limit on subject matter. Michael Long brews a good carafe of virtual coffee.

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) Later Springtime 2021 - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral

and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com *or, for dull bloggery,* https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com *- remember, when it comes to corrections, just call me Winston Smith!*

Newsletter "EXTRA" for Summer 2021 (August 1, anyway)

ELECTIONS AUGUST 6TH IN AN EMAIL NEAR YOU!

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is a blend of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation.

Current ASIFA Central Board

President and IAD Multiverse Traveler
Briana Yarhouse

Secretary of Unfocused Distractions, Insolent Lymphoma, and Cracked Fonts
Jim Middleton

Coordinator for Membership, German Translations, and Technological Phenomena
Charles Wilson

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and AniZoomation
Deanna Morse

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Multiplanar Pies
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Interlocutor of Projects, Feline Friskiness, and Anniversary Cupcakes
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando ***WITH THE NEATEST BASEMENT IN THE MIDWEST***
Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge of Toasted Engravings
Steven Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Robert Swieringa

Stopped Motionator, Rocket launch monitor, and Tripod Convergence Coordinator

Your name could appear in this roster of fame

MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR THE ASIFA CENTRAL BOARD

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Elections are coming up, with the new Chapter Bylaws finalized and available on our website, www.asifa.org. The following candidates provided their requested brief biography as a prelude to the electronic ballots coming to active members *very soon!*

(Arranged alphabetically by last name)

Julie Goldstein

Julie Goldstein

I see the art form of animation as providing the opportunity to conjure up the energy of life through time based expression. This expression can be perceived and passed on to the minds of others. It is a pure expression of the life force and provides the opportunity to visualize that which cannot be seen in the physical world.

I have been on the board of ASIFA Central since 2016 and prior to that was the President of ASIFA Colorado from 2012-2015. I see ASIFA's mission as core to my engagement with the art of animation as a practitioner and fan, providing the opportunity to spread to the love of the art and the process of creating. As a member of the organization and Board, I embrace my leadership role in regards to assisting in maintaining the website, providing workshops on various evolving technologies, moderating guest artists at our retreats, hosting holiday stop motion productions at my house, participating in the Anijams and International Animation Day collaborations, as well as working to showcase work in local venues, such as with Project 1. In the future, I look forward to building on my leadership skills by developing new workshops, facilitating collaborations as well as expanding our online and local presence in order to amplify our outreach and grow our membership!

Stephan Leeper

Stephan Leeper

I am submitting this brief letter to express my strong desire to continue as an ASIFA Central Board Member "at large" for the foreseeable future. ASIFA Central plays a vital role in connecting animators in the greater Mid-West and I have benefited greatly from the friendships, projects and camaraderie that comes from being part of this close-knit group of animators. My contributions as a board member "at large" over the past four years stem from a deep connection to ASIFA's core mission to reach across cultural barriers and to use animation to help celebrate our shared humanity. A commitment that has played out in my willingness to run workshops, participate in retreat planning, and general involvement in many ASIFA activities over the years.

Given the current nature of my responsibilities at CMU, a sole tenured faculty in a fledgling Animation BFA program, I am reluctant to take on any overarching ASIFA responsibilities at this time. That said, I am more than willing to continue in my current "at large" support role, participating in regulars meetings, planning for events, and taking on practical (and technical) responsibilities as my schedule allows.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

==========

Michael Long

Michael Long

I've been an ASIFA-Central member for 2 years. From my first retreat in 2019 I knew this was a talented, nurturing animation community. I volunteered for the Spiritus Mundi "Potluck" project last year, which afterwards led to my hosting monthly ASIFA Zoom "coffee breaks" to maintain our friendly, collaborative group. The "breaks" provide time to play, exchange ideas, share projects, and find inspiration among friends. If elected to the board, I'll continue to host the Zoom breaks in that spirit while encouraging more members to join in. I'd also like to help improve our connections with other ASIFA chapters here and abroad. The goal is to strengthen our community and use animation whenever and wherever we can to further the mission of ASIFA. Thanks!

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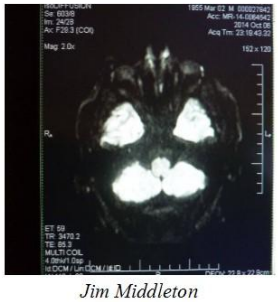
Jim Middleton



Jim Middleton

When informed that this note required a single pair of graphs, I was rather stumped, since a pair is not a single, but a single can somehow be a pair? This is why I enjoy my two-volume dictionary, and even more, enjoy a couple of typewriters always polished and at the ready for whatever textual taxonomical task is placed before these digits. Of course, the actual request was for a paragraph, so up went the dictionary and down came Strunk and White. Years of typing prescription labels, correcting monstrous errors by budgetary consultants, and reading notes spilled upon Post-Its have prepared me for a secretarial position at ASIFA Central, where I delight in assembling at least a quartet of newsletters a year, now in Living Color since digital distribution negates the need for inkish behavior. Hi. My name is Jim Middleton. I have retired the "Apothecary" portion of my "Animating Apothecary" shingle. It has been an honor to serve as ASIFA Central's Secretary for three years now, helping background organizing when needed, serving as liaison among the many international chapters when possible, and enjoying it so much that my smile will outlive me by seven years. Among my future goals is an expansion of the communication process among the US and international chapters and the development of an archival network of animation fans and collectors, including material in the public domain. It is my sincerest belief that information not shared is lost.

Tracy Miller-Robbins

Tracy Miller-Robbins

I've taught all forms of animation in a variety of settings for 25+ years, while also exhibiting my animated installations/films in a variety of venues around the world, and doing volunteer animation/storyboard projects when I can. I am passionate about all forms of animation, but in particular that which breaks boundaries and conventions, that which innovates. In workshops I make animation accessible to everyone, adjusting to their interests and skill levels. I believe in supporting other creatives and sharing resources, creating a diverse supportive community, and to this end I have published a blog about festivals with no entry fee, because I don't want to support a world where the best voices go unheard. It is this attitude and these interests which I would hope to utilize as a member of the ASIFA Central board, a group I have felt welcomed by, almost instantaneously. I would like to see ASIFA Central grow to include more animators and have more events, and coming out of the pandemic, I would love to facilitate these, both online and in person through community workshops, screenings, exhibits, projects or get-togethers.

==========

Deanna Morse

Deanna Morse

I wish to remain on the ASIFA/Central board. I have been active with ASIFA for a couple of decades, locally serving as past-President, membership, treasurer, and internationally as a V.P. for several terms. My interest is in helping to support and build our animation community. I will work to assist with our existing programs (IAD, retreat, etc.), and to help us share information and resources nationally and internationally with other groups, animators and ASIFA members. Although I now live in Oregon, my heart is still with the Midwest animation community.

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Chris Sagovac

Chris Sagovac

I'm Chris Sagovac, Associate Professor of Animation and Chair, at Webster University. I am a current board member and Social Media Officer. I have a vested interest in growing and being a part of the leadership of our vibrant animation community, spanning the Midwest. I have always enjoyed bringing people together and seek to broaden our connection to the region. Spanning now from Michigan to Texas, there are so many cities, institutions, and artists that could become a part of the ASIFA Central family. I wish to submit my name for consideration to serve on the board.

==========

Bob Swieringa

Hello! I am Bob Swieringa, a member of the ASIFA Central Board since 2017. I am an assistant professor at Grand Valley State University in Communication Studies but teach in film and animation as well. As a Member-at-Large on the Board, I contribute as my skills allow on projects undertaken by the Board. The majority of these contributions have been to help organize our annual Retreats, and to assist in/undertake writing projects. For example, I assist the Secretary in writing the Newsletter and in creating our report of the annual Retreat. I also help to promote International Animation Day by interviewing the IAD poster creator (the previous two and this year's), writing releases describing their ideas and process. As well, I help to promote ASIFA and its membership (such as through a history of its annual prize laureates). I seek to remain on the Board to continue offering support and assistance to

the goals of ASIFA Central, particularly in projects to help promote ASIFA and its membership. For example, I would like to develop a "Members' Corner" for our Chapter Newsletter/web site which would highlight in turn the work and practice of our members individually, so we can encounter and appreciate the variety of talent, expertise, and expression embodied in our membership.
Thank you for your consideration.

Bob Swieringa

==========

Christine Veras

Christine Veras

I'm Christine Veras, an international member of ASIFA Central for the past two years. I'm originally from Brazil and currently teach History of Animation and Experimental Animation at the University of Texas at Dallas. ASIFA Central's strength lies in its friendly and supportive community. As a prospective board member, I would like to help develop further collaborations within our membership, and between us and academia, including institutions, faculty, and students passionate about animation. Creating events, special interest groups, and fostering opportunities for discussions and exchanges are my goals to reinforce our chapter's strengths. Thus, helping to increase its visibility nationally and internationally while boosting and animating community engagement, getting us closer to our collective plan to "try to take over the world" (Brain, 1995) through animation.
Cheers!

==========

Gretchen Vinnedge

Gretchen Vinnedge

As an animation lover, creator and teacher, I have had the pleasure of being a member of ASIFA Central USA for many years. Every year, I look forward to working with youth as part of the annual Animation Workshop Group, as well as teaching workshops to students of all ages. I have been on the board for the past 6+ years helping to organize chapter events such as International Animation Day and hosting many Summer retreats and other workshops at the Community Media Center. I would love to continue serving on the board helping to bring animators together through collaboration, workshops and the love of animation.

==========

Briana Yarhouse

Bri Yarhouse

I have had the honor of serving on the ASIFA Central Board for about 6 years and as president of ASIFA Central for the last four years. My goals as president were also my passion as a board member; to build community over a large diverse area. I have worked hard along with the rest of the board to create events such as our physical film sharing events at the Wealthy Theatre in Grand Rapids, collaborative projects such as the Ani-Jam's that we have done for the last several years including our participation in Spiritus Mundi: Animating the World last year. I've helped along with other board members spearhead our annual retreats including the last two that were done through Zoom. My goals are to continue to build inclusivity, opportunity for community through digital tools, collaborative projects, and in person events. We are spread out throughout the Midwest and I believe we need to actively build community to help foster and support not just the art form of animation but our creativity as animators.

ASIFA Central

Another August
Newsletter for 2021

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. Because we are volunteers, we ask our board members to take on some of the responsibilities such as social media coordinator, retreat co-organizer, doing web updates, ani-jam facilitator, party planners and more. Board members are the front line for our Midwest animation chapter and are in touch with the international board.

ASIFA Central Board

President and IAD Multiverse Traveler
Briana Yarhouse

Secretary of Unfocused Distractions, Insolent Lymphoma, and Cracked Fonts
Jim Middleton

Coordinator for Membership, German Translations, and Technological Phenomena
Charles Wilson

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and AniZoomation
Deanna Morse

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Multiplanar Pies
Christopher Sagovac

Interlocutor of Projects, Feline Friskiness, and Virtual Cupcakes *(nom nom nom)*
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Digital Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando ***WITH THE NEATEST BASEMENT IN THE MIDWEST***
Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge of Toasted Engravings
Steven Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Bob Swieringa

Stop-Motionator, Rocket launch monitor, and Tripod Convergence Coordinator
Gary Schwartz

THE 2021 ASIFA CENTRAL SUMMER RETREAT

July 16 -18 - a Virtual Experience

from the dog-eared notebooks of Bob Swieringa and Jim Middleton

Gretchen Vinnedge provided the most delicious of virtual cakes for this year's retreat

Friday, 7/16:

That collection of shorts from OIAF. Great, varied collection of shorts, all interesting to view. Brought to us via the persistent generosity of the Polly Wolly Doodlers. Once the link to the films became available, attendees retired to watch them independently. A lively discussion followed that as participants reconvened to share reactions and ideas. It was a wonderful beginning for the Retreat, immersing us collectively even though we were geographically separate. The event set the tone well for the weekend.

The Ottawa International Animation Festival generously provided us with ten "best of" examples from their 2020 selections, in addition to making virtual attendance at this year's festival available to ASIFA members at a discount. These films ran the spectrum of brief whimsy (*Ma Mer à Boire*, a stop-motion dream where the bed becomes a living beach), absolute surrealism (*Pà kis Panelom!)* surrounding an apartment complex, to life-sized styrofoam (*KKUM). Mor Visste Ingenting ("Mother Didn't Know")* was part of a larger project that made use of five-foot sets and elaborate puppetry. All of the films possessed some level of aesthetic uniqueness.

ASIFA discounts await members!

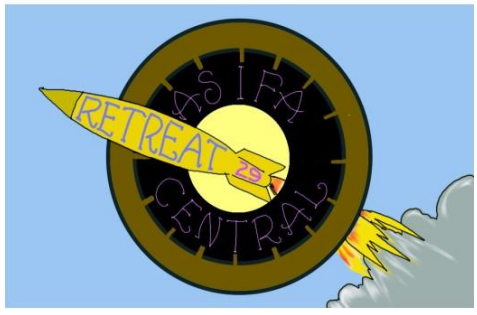
This composite can be created during a brief workshop? Astounding. *(Photo by Deanna Morse)*

Saturday, 7/17:

Retreaters regathered resoundingly on Saturday for the main day of the Retreat.

And resounding it was! Julie Goldstein was able to, within an hour, walk us through the mysteries of Adobe Aero and Character Animator, with a taste of Mixamo, and had us using this suite of products to create real-time visual integration which can then be adjusted in Premiere or as a motion capture tool to create character movement from a massive library of examples. *(I had just experienced some VR games before the retreat, and I gladly profess that making these environments is a whole lot more fun than merely playing in them!)* The Adobe suite of programs is definitely robust and expanding with several of the products being extremely sophisticated even in *beta* mode. *(And it gave me the opportunity to split an infinitive! Mrs. Rutledge would be soooo disappointed!)*

For more info on the software – https://www.adobe.com/products/aero.html



The second workshop, "TP Animation," was hosted by Michael Long and Melissa Bouwman. This was a lively workshop presenting techniques and ideas for animating all that excess tissue gathered during the previous year. After examples and guidelines (additionally provided on a handy handout), participants each set to work on our own "masTPerpiece." When completed, we uploaded our shorts and Melissa tirelessly wove them together for our later viewing. It was a wonderful and inventive workshop, helping to get creative electricity sparking among us – a superb outcome and goal for the annual Retreat.

The "how to" portion of the TP workshop, with the emphasis on "Stop Motion Studio" is a supplement to this newsletter!

With enough TP, you're never out of scratch pads

After a break, the sparks continued with a series of Lightning Talks from participants who volunteered to share their current and future creative work, their various projects with students and communities, and their discoveries of animation material that helped to fuel them during these isolating days of the pandemic. It was great to behold the ideas, activities, and creativity being undertaken by members, even under very limiting circumstances. Again, this reminded me of the importance of our chapter, and the involvement of its members in myriad manners.

Chris Sagovac gave us a walk down memory lane with his 16-bit *PISKEL* demo. These bouncing balls have *edge.*

Jorgelina Orfila gave a presentation on *Animation as Therapeutic Practice* through the *Animation Research Gang* (http://www.animationduo.com/arg.html), where stop-motion animation facilitates art therapy, using tactile experiences with available material to express personal narratives in one-minute personal masterpieces. Their program in Lubbock, Texas, continues to grow annually.

Frame from "Time Passing : Passing Time"

Deanna Morse, Gretchen Vinnedge, Suzanne Zack, and Jim Middleton, the "Polly Wolly Doodlers" discussed their animated ArtPrize project, *Time Passing : Passing Time,* appearing at Grand Rapids' Water Colors Aquarium from September 16 - October 3. (Entry 70766)

Christine Veras described her *Experimental Animation Lab,* with the credo, "Come Experiment with us!" - and be *experimena.l.* ! WWW.aggie.io was presented as an online, collaborative painting.

Michael Long gave a progress report on his dreamy, aquatic short film, *Island Hopping*, a metaphor for life being the journey, not the destination.

Deanna Morse gave a breathlessly paced overview of the concept of *The Exquisite Corpse*, how *Renga* begat *Haiku,* and her recent series of projects inspired by the endless number of Zoom meetings being held during the pandemic. *Anizoomation* has absorbed large portions of her bandwidth time, creating fun images with fellow animator Melissa Bouwman.

Chris Scott (https://orrinscott.blogspot.com/) had *Stuff to Share*, from Spike and Mike, to the Orange Years at Nickelodeon, to *Tommy Stathes Cartoon Carnival*. His library is a phenomenon unto itself.

Jim Middleton showed the progress on his short film, *Seule Töd*, stitching together about seven minutes of the 80% completed film. Christine Veras noted that, assembled, it's "making sense now." Jim asked her to "please explain it to me, someday."

Gretchen Vinnedge

We broke for dinner, a virtual "going out" compared to previous Retreats when we have gathered in 3D. But there was plenty more online for us in the evening to anticipate.
Evidently forgoing sustenance, Melissa stitched together our TP animations into one film for us to enjoy. It was wild! Colors, shapes, movement in such varied energy on what can be seen as such a humble medium. A wonderful reminder that the life animation brings to us is limitless in form and presentation.

With our eyeballs primed, we turned to the last event, one that truly emphasized to me the "family" nature of this year's Retreat: an evening of members sharing animation that they love, are amazed by, are creating, find impactful, - in short, that somehow stands out and connects to each who spoke. It was a true mix highlighting the personal links we create with animation; a joy to hear among our colleagues.

Christine Veras shared her thoughts on "persistence of vision" through Dana Sink's *Power* from 2018

Michael Long produced the UPA classic, *Rootie Toot Toot* from 1951 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE8_ddz0XvI) definitely not an animation for the matinee crowd, as an example of innovation with limited resources

Bob Swieringa chose the found-foam production miracle from 2010, *The Eagleman Stag* (https://vimeo.com/41756240) for his moving animation moment

Deanna Morse directed us to a few moments from the fastidiously created short, *Circular,* by Páraic McGloughlin, featured recently at the AAFF. McGloughlin must have external hard drives stuffed with visual material.

Brianna Yarhouse chose the striking graphic design of Julia Pott's *Belly* as a personal favorite, a Sundance festival choice as well from 2012

Jim Middleton expressed his appreciation to John Canemaker, Elfreida Fischinger, and William Moritz for their 1977 appearance on *Camera Three* - restoring his enthusiasm for animation through Fischinger's *Studies* and showing him that, even with spatula in hand, there is a reason to get up and be thankful for every day. (John Canemaker archive article at https://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.4/awm2.4pages/2.4canemakernyu.html) (Fischinger appreciation at (https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com/2007/02/oskar-fischinger-saved-my-life_04.html)

Gretchen Vinnedge championed Chelsea Manifold's stop-motion film, *View O Rama*, from 2004 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5QBsyY-RbU) - a former area student, she recently appeared at Kendall in Grand Rapids as a visiting artist

Julie Goldstein found *Springtime in CoVid Land,* a work in progress using motion capture from Adobe's *Character Animator*. Again, this Adobe suite of programs is very impressive.

David Baker wrapped up this "sense of community with our peeps" with *The Poetry Project,* where students must come up with a script and create visual assets from scratch.

Greetchen Vinnedge

And, having told each other these sweet bedtime stories, we tucked ourselves in and slid off to pleasant dreams - ending the 29th ASIFA Central Summer Retreat

FESTIVAL NEWS - Coming Up - The Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF)

notes by Charles Wilson, Forensic Animator and ASIFA Central Membership Coordinator

Founded in 1976, the Ottawa International Animation Festival has become the second largest animation festival in the world and the largest in the Western Hemisphere. Every September, animators from all over the world migrate to Ottawa, Ontario, Canada for five days of screenings, retrospectives, workshops, panel discussions, and parties--all about animation!

In 2020 and 2021, the festival organizers made a decision to move forward, business-as-usual, with one significant change: in lieu of holding the usual in-person festival, they extended the festival to two weeks and streamed the event online so folks all over the world could attend virtually--with the hopes to return to a physical in-person festival in the not too distant future.

The upcoming Ottawa festival will be held from September 22nd to October 3rd. *And as a member organization, ASIFA members in good standing have been offered a $10 discount off of the normal pass price. That's right, if you want to attend the festival this year (from the comfort of your own home), it'll be $50 instead of the $60 price for non-members.* And this discount extends to those who would like to attend the Ottawa Festival's Television Animation Conference that occurs in the days leading up the festival. For those who want to attend both the OIAF and the TAC, the price will be $110 instead of the non-member price of $120.

And if you're not a member or have let your membership lapse, please consider joining ASIFA Central to enjoy this special perk of membership. Lastly, if you don't know if your membership is current, please feel free to e-mail me at asifa@asifa.org and I can see if you're on the list of current members eligible for the discount, that I'll be sending to the Ottawa Festival next month.

The box office will go live near the end of July. And in order to buy a pass for the festival, you'll need to register an account with the festival portal "eventival.com", which you should do ahead of time. The festival director will have a list of ASIFA Central members and you will receive an email from me (Charles Wilson) with the password for the discount. Don't buy the pass before you receive the password - you won't get the discount!

Information about the OIAF itself can be read on their website at animationfestival.ca which includes things like the short and feature film selections.
One important notice before we get to the e-mail from the festival:
This discount is only available for ASIFA Central members at the International level who have paid their dues for the 2021 year. If you're not sure what your membership status is, please feel free to e-mail me at asifa@asifa.org to verify, as in the next week or so, I'll be sending a list of our current members to the festival so they can validate your discount when you order your pass. As new members join (or people re-up their membership), I'll be e-mailing those updates to the festival, so you still have time to get in on the action.

The Animapass 60$ (50$ with Association discount) features access to:
• All Screenings and Talks.
• The Animation Exposé Fair (featuring animation schools, recruiters, and more).
• The Virtual NightOwl Party.

The TAC Pass 120$ (110 with association discount) features access to:
The Fast Track speed meeting sessions featuring buyers from around the world.
Exclusive TAC networking opportunities and the TAC Delegate Guide
• All Screenings and Talks.
• The Animation Exposé Fair (featuring animation schools, recruiters, and more).
• The Virtual NightOwl Party.
• Option to apply for inclusion in Artist Gallery (an opportunity for OIAF participants to showcase their work to studios and recruiters in attendance)

Next issue - "A Year of Lockdown Festivals, Covid Conventions, and Animation Fund-Raising - coming as soon as this archive drive finishes its backup!

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) Summertime (August) 2021 - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org
And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*
As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com *or, for dull bloggery,* https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

BONUS FEATURE IN THIS EDITION OF THE ASIFA CENTRAL NEWSLETTER:
TP ANIMATION: PANDEMIC EDITION - with Melissa Bauwman

WHEN ANIMATING YOUR TOILET PAPER:
You can keep the roll intact or separate the sheets and use a simple x-y axis guide to register your drawings. Abstract shapes and rhythms; color transitions; even simple narratives with objects or figures--all are possible. The invitation is to work rough and loose. Draw or paint with media that soak into the paper: water colors, sharpies, inks, etc. Rely on liquid accidents.

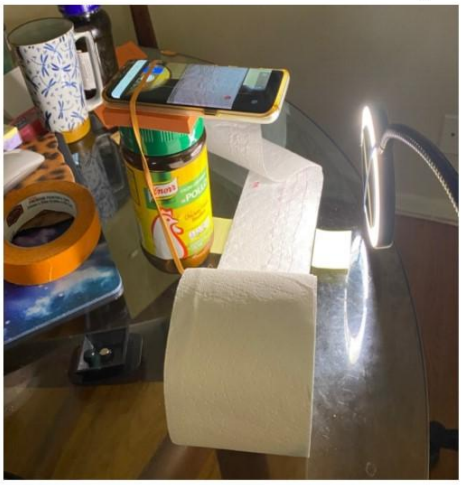
It's good to put something under the sheets to soak up any excess colors as you work and protect your drawing surface. You probably won't be able to stack the sheets for onion skin work or to flip them--but If you find a way, please share your technique! Trust in guessing at positioning colors, shapes, and figures and see what happens.

Other observations:

- Thicker TP is easier to work with, tears less.
- Using a "downshooter" method to capture is recommended, as shooting the animation on your toilet paper holder is very challenging and time consuming.

PRIOR TO THE WORKSHOP:
Please have your capture set-up figured out. If you don't have frame capture software, Stop Motion Studio (by Cateater) is our recommended app. It's easy, free, and it's available for both iPhones and Androids.
If you plan to use Stop Motion Studio, and it's your first time - please review the Capturing your Animation notes below for tips to set up your home capture station and to test the app.

CAPTURING YOUR ANIMATION - DIY Style:

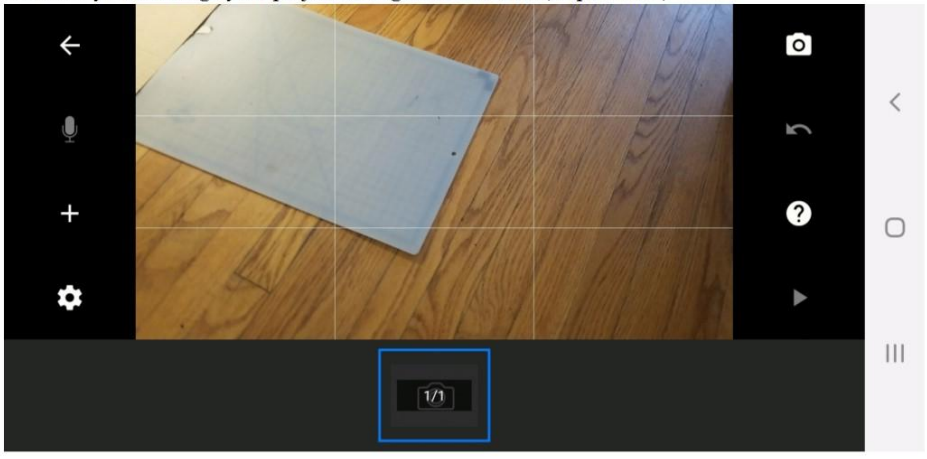


Setting up a "Downshooter" with household materials:
You can use cans, water bottles to give your phone camera the vertical distance needed to frame up your TP. If you need just a little more height, padding with packs of sticky notes or folded paper helps.
Secure phone with rubber bands, or non-tacky tape - be aware of location of shutter button.

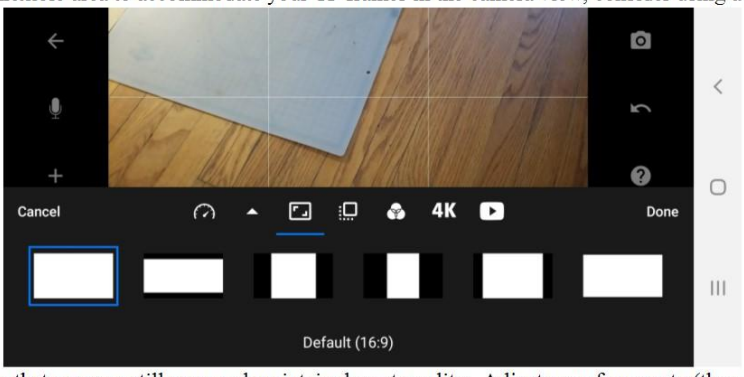
Create a registration setup - I used *Post-Its* to align the perforations

GETTING STARTED STOP MOTION STUDIO (SMS):
To give the manual a glance when you open the app on your phone, you can use the drop down menu in the upper left corner, choose help, and it will launch the manual with tutorials and instructions. The tutorial clips are cute and informational. The manual will show you how to set up your camera to **change the camera mode to manual** so you can make adjustments to exposure and focus during shooting. Using manual settings will avoid auto-focus/auto exposure flicker.

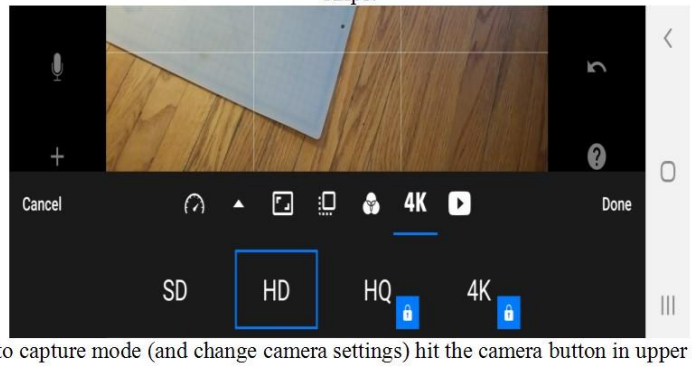
The gear icon will allow you to change your project settings like frame rate, aspect ratio,



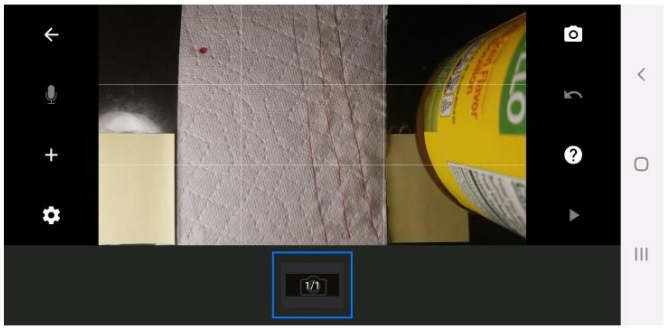
In order to give yourself a flexible area to accommodate your TP frames in the camera view, consider using a wider capture aspect ratio.



Use HD capture quality so that you can still crop and maintain decent quality. Adjust your frame rate (the speedometer icon) - I used 12fps.



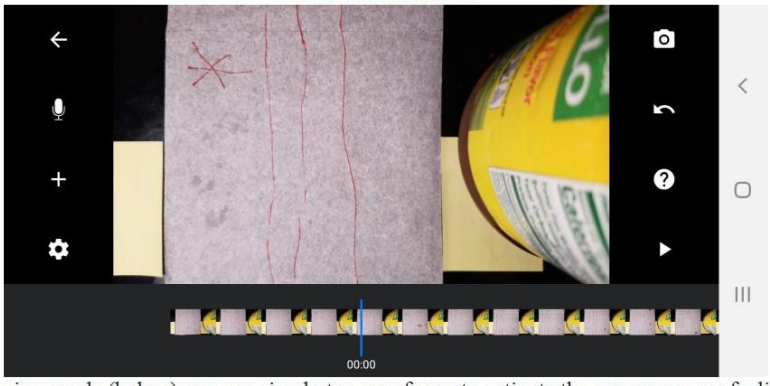
To move into capture mode (and change camera settings) hit the camera button in upper right corner.



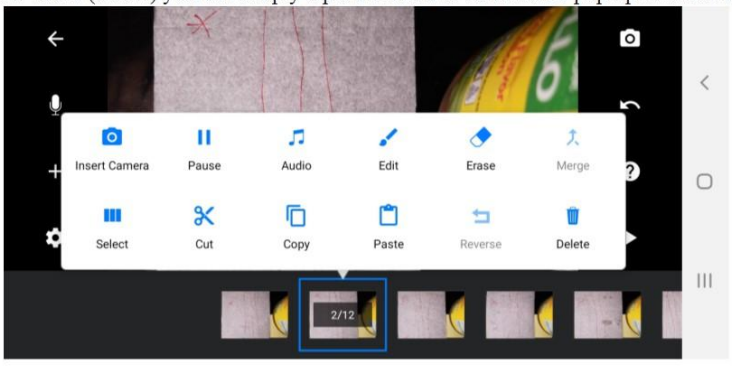
TIP: During your capture session, consider using the grid to line up the edge of your TP.
To take pictures tap the red button. To adjust onion skin, use slider on left hand side of screen (a very nice feature - remember how great it seemed on "Lunchbox"?).

If you make a mistake just shoot the frame again. You can remove frames in "Timeline Mode." To get to Timeline Mode from the capture window, just hit the back arrow in the upper-right hand corner.

When you enter Timeline Mode, you may have to double tap a frame at the bottom of the screen to see the "frame view" where you can edit/remove frames.



In the frame view mode (below) you can simply tap on a frame to activate the pop up menu of editing options.



To wrap things up, press the arrow pointing left at the top left. You'll be brought back to the main menu, with "My Movie" now one of the selections available.

Press on the image for "my movie" and a blue menu bar will appear at the top of the screen.
The "share icon" (a V pointing left, with pronounced dots at its points) will permit you to export the movie, create an animated GIF, export all images, or create a flip book.

Exporting the images will create a series of JPGs that can then be imported to a video editing program.
Movies are exported as mp4s.
Flip books are exported as pdf files. Snip snip! Staple staple!
For a freebie, *Stop Motion Studio* has many options.

CTOBER

ASIFA CENTRAL

FESTIVALS AND SHAMELESS-SELF-PROMOTION ISSUE

FALL - October - 2021 - In *COLOR*

Polly Wolly Doodlers and ArtPrize

by Deanna Morse

https://www.artprize.org/70766 (Act fast! This link was made to be broken!)

Time Passing : Passing Time, a new animated video poem by four award winning filmmakers was unveiled at ArtPrize 2021 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The collaborative piece was created during the lock down, with animation by Jim Middleton, Deanna Morse, and Gretchen Vinnedge, and post production by Suzanne Zack. Scattered across the country, often in isolation, these artists worked with common ideas and themes, reflecting their quirky sensibilities, and staying sane, connected by the now ubiquitous ZOOM.

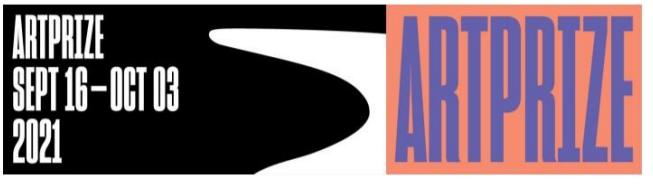
The Polly Wolly Doodlers
Suzanne Zack, Deanna Morse, Gretchen Vinnedge, Jim Middleton *photo by Josh Geyer*

The resulting five-minute video was placed behind a large table-top aquarium at Water Colors Aquarium, 453 S Division, in Grand Rapids, with an audience of cichlids enjoying the colorful animated images. Oh, humans, too. Unicorns, time lapsing flowers, and dancing dolls invited the viewer to find connections and reflect on the past year where nothing happened, and everything happened.

An opening reception for the artists at the Water Colors Aquarium introduced the installation on September 14, and the work remained on display from September 16 until October 3. The installation hosts were, and remain, incredibly generous with their time, space, and carpentry skills, and will likely keep the film running throughout the month of October. The team was thrilled to screen their piece at this remarkable venue. Accompanying *Time Passing : Passing Time* was a baker's dozen of original haiku cards, crafted by Jim Middleton, and soon to be rare collector's items. Or recycled. (Jim's notes)

Deanna Morse, GVSU Professor emeritus, has created works for Sesame Street, among others. She has presented in nearly every ArtPrize, and was a jurors finalist in 2013 with *Whispers of the Prairie*. Gretchen Vinnedge, educator and producer, has a diverse body of work that has won numerous awards. Suzanne Zack a professor at GVSU, is also an award winning filmmaker. The three of them created the 2014 piece *Animation Collaboration* for ArtPrize, which was in the finals for the public vote. Late-bloomer Jim Middleton is an award winning animator, impromptu haiku typist, motion graphics instructor and retired pharmacist; this was his first time exhibiting with ArtPrize. All are members of the Midwest Chapter of ASIFA, the International Animation Association chartered by UNESCO in 1960.

The video component may be screened online at
https://vimeo.com/580950944



The focus and discipline behind each work of independent animation preserves the intent – if only subconsciously – of the creator's thoughts with each pencil stroke upon paper. Careful examination of each stroke will also reveal the level of caffeination at the time of those thoughts.

The opportunity to meld minds from distances impossible in the past can create collaborations that take on a life of their own.

Even when we weren't thinking of the pandemic, or being contained in our respective safe places, animation allowed us to expand beyond the confines of our camera stands, proving that the mind can occupy greater space than our shells.

Having the opportunity to work with this quartet of doodlers has proven to be one of the best memories I can take away from a frequently dreadful year. I raise a stylus, an ink pot, a Cintiq tablet and shout HUZZAH to all, a new family rebuilt 24 times per second.

Image color edit J. Middleton

Stuttgart and the ITFS

by Jim Middleton

The ITFS (International TrickFilm - Stuttgart) was incredibly German from start to finish - my initial online enrollment was immediately met with a solemn request for verifiable proof of legitimacy as someone in the animation industry, since the transaction involved international funds, followed by a reassignment of my status, which then prompted a series of credits, rebilling, and re-registration, all with step-by-step email documentation, occasionally all-German emails (that part likely in response to my attempt at - *ha* - clever use of Google Translate to respond in kind), several extremely polite apologies for any confusion, and then, afterwards, no fewer than three evaluation requests - I answered those with delight and appreciation for their diligence, which may have prompted the duplicate requests, just to be sure the initial response was legitimate - and then a flurry of links to other activities in Stuttgart when travel in Europe is again possible. These folks iron their socks.

The time zone difference for this (and other) international festivals and conferences was rather problematic - six hour differences, complicated by some US presenters being routed to Stuttgart, and then back to the US, to the point where I gave up on some of the live presentations and opted for the many reruns that were made available (thankfully, from this near-narcoleptic's standpoint) for days after their initial showing.

And, while travel to Europe still remains more hypothetical than tangible, there is some comfort to be gained knowing a round trip ticket to Stuttgart runs $1000-$1500 (all options being "connecting flights" when I checked in May), and seven nights in a modestly priced hotel can quickly top $300 (more if you stayed at the *Premiere* Inn - Stuttgart); but a virtual ticket to this festival was 34.99 Euro (or $42.16 in early May).

The opening statements on the 4th were from Alexander Franke and Franziska Glase; I knew not what they said for the most part, but their ebullience was riveting. They could have me tune in to hear the yellow pages. And my third grade German lessons were of absolutely no use – nobody once broke into "Du, Du, Liegst Mir im Herzen." Mrs. Huxel would be so disappointed (Mr. Franke and Ms. Glase promise to return in 2022. I wonder if they'll take requests).

Willkommen in Stuttgart!

It takes ten techs to handle a Q and A at ITFS!

There was no lack of stunning features and shorts in the on-demand presentations at ITFS. *Affairs of the Art* by Joanna Quinn had its stunning and hilarious German premiere, taking sibling rivalry to a new level. Her recorded presentation afterwards was just as entertaining, as she sat surrounded by piles of drawings from the film.

Just a few of the other films included:

Jung and Restless featured the precise visual calligraphy from Joanna Priestley, using the quote from C. G. Jung, "Life is a short pause between two mysteries," as a viewer's guide in this study of color, composition, and multi-layering.

Ferdinand Ehrhardt directed the film with the melodic title *Obervogelgesang* - a black and white examination of growing up with the Nazi legacy in the Saxon region. To a girl on a train, one in three passengers is a Nazi - she walks down the aisle counting, "Ein, zwei, Nazi..." and "running away from a scheissen idea" gets a translation title with an f-bomb instead of an s-slide.

Hideous Hank carried on the darkness in a dog shelter called "The Dead Rascal" with the pronouncement that "Wagging Sets You Free." An ugly Chihuahua gets adopted, making his life worse than before the shelter. *Courage the Cowardly Dog* meets *Ren and Stimpy* was one viewer's description of this Dutch production by Junaid Chundrigar.

"To all my friends who are dancing with their demons and talking to their whales," was the artist statement by Anna Samo for *Conversations with a Whale*, inspired by the rejections of festivals from her previous film. She took an improvisational approach to the film, changing her process whenever she "became bored" with her direction.

Many of the films were followed with artist and production statements, and the theme of production methods emerged to be one of the more insightful and revealing talking points of the festival.

International Production Differences Quickly Emerged at ITFS

Unlike the US, European/Asian/African film making does not involve a centralized production/distribution base such as a Disney, Sony, or Dreamworks. Their work model is to build a funding foundation first, move pieces of the production around the continent, or continents, based on tax breaks with public and private support. Often only a story outline exists at that point. When enough money can be raised to carry a production forward, *then* the storyboarding is completed and the film is created, frequently - and deliberately - *not* concerned with a US market. And if a story doesn't generate enough initial capital, it can be sold to another set of producers who feel their take on the project could be successful. It's a completely different philosophy, summed up by Ron Dyens, of Sacrebleu Productions,"Too much money kills creativity." (He also stressed that Sacrebleu is a *production* company, *not* an animation studio.)

Ainbo-Spirit of the Amazon, CMG productions, with not much concern about US distribution - see https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/cmg-sells-annecy-bound-ainbo-155221547.html

ITFS - continues even *more!*

A film such as *Ainbo - Spirit of the Amazon*, for example (trailer at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMbV1BDlmqQ - watch and mumble HOLY COW), was put together with a budget of 10 million euros, with a 3 million euro presale *before production even began.* A Sony representative invited to a viewing was "flabbergasted at the beauty of the film given the budget you had." *(Warning - digression approaching - I immediately recalled a Pixar Master Class in 2012 and a discussion about using some extra budget to fiddle with a few seconds in* Brave*, involving a bear running, after principle production was completed. They thought it demonstrated a desire for perfection. They showed the "before and after" clips. I'd have to heartily agree with Ron Dyens on that use of budget. At times it's good to think like Edgar Ulmer. To put things in perspective,* Brave *had a budget of $185 million. You can afford a lot of variety if you're able to make 15 features for the cost of one.)*

The other advantage to this sort of production is to enhance the level of diversity in story telling, sincerely tailoring a film to an indigenous South American audience, for example, beyond merely offering a Spanish soundtrack.

Aardman and Ambersons - A Brief Sampling of the many ITFS Programs

Aardman productions had been working on master classes of its own, trying to develop at-distance learning even before the pandemic hit. Their statement that the *Aardman Academy is committed to nurturing talent by delivering excellence in film and animation training and mentoring* introduces its course called *Industry Training: Stop Motion 1.* (https://academy.aardman.com/kdie8r8wjh3if9doaj)

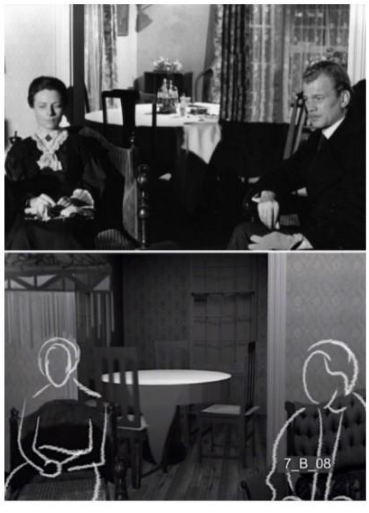
Mark Simon Hewis spoke from his "shed, a bit of an upside down boat" in describing the training, a program that goes back to a three month training at Aardman druing the production of *Chicken Run* (2000). The cost is 2750 pounds, (you can use PayPal!), it runs 12 weeks, and participants should allow themselves at least 10 hours a week for the assignments, have a basic camera that can plug into a computer, and of course, internet access.

Aardman provides Dragonframe software, a Dragonframe controller, a character rig and lots and lots of Plasticine. The emphasis is *mime, pantomime,* and *motion before emotion.* The final four weeks of the program are set aside for "personal project development."

Three days a week are set aside for live mentor meetings (there are seven total mentors, including some familiar faces at Aardman). Things are booked through 2021, and the spring 2022 classes will begin enrolling in a few months. The online process helps conserve studio space, which even after rebuilding from its disastrous fire of 2005, is jammed with production work for the next five years.

Mark Simon Hewis and his shed/office

Brian Rose, like many fans of the *Magnificent Ambersons,* laments RKO's butchering of Orson Welles' "lost classic" of 1942.



Having obtained access to the original editing continuity before the film was substantially altered by the studio, he was able to recreate the missing scenes, while tracking down film clips that were used in promotion but never appeared in the final release as an additional guide. His reconstruction method is to build the sets of the Amberson mansion within a 3D animation space and use voice actors to recreate the excised dialogue. The ITFS gave the opportunity for him to show how animation is essential in this reconstruction, and how he has laid the groundwork for a $200k project.

The rumors of a complete 16mm print somewhere in South America (the sort of lucky discovery that allowed for the nearly complete reconstruction of the silent classic *Metropolis*), continue to frustrate fans of the film. This animation reconstruction may be a good use of "deep fake" technology.

https://www.wellesnet.com/ambersons-reconstruction

BUT WAIT! There's MORE from ITFS!

Highlights of the 2021 festival can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1n37ZjTtKBI And then check out *Sad Beauty* by Arjan Brentjes, the Lotte Reiniger memorial award winner, *I'm Here,* the Grand Prix *Only a Child*...and remember that *Remains to be Seen* is the name of a pet taxidermist!

Signe Baumane's Animation Wrap Party
with guest columnist, Karl Cohen of ASIFA-SF
- a May 23rd recollection -

SIGNE BAUMANE'S HAS COMPLETED THE ANIMATION FOR HER 2ND FEATURE

Work on *My Love Affair with Marriage* began in 2015 when she considered applying for a grant for a film about the biology of love and relationships. In May she completed the last of 40,000 drawings of the film that evolved, and used up 662 pencils in the process.

Signe Baumane's Online Wrap Party

To celebrate that achievement Signe held a zoom gathering in late May to show off clips from her work in progress and to talk about the production's history. She invited her friends in the worldwide animation community and her supporters to hear her talk about her six year struggle to try and complete her film. The focus of her talk at the event was to disclose some of the pitfalls and insanity she went through to get to the point where she can feel the end is in sight.

Although I haven't seen enough of the film to comment on the story, I do know it is going to be a visually exciting work. It has a unique look that combines excellent looking miniature 3D sets and 2D drawn animation. The footage shown in May included drawn modeling in light and shadows, dramatic lighting and camerawork that produces a shallow depth of field to create the illusion of 3D depth. Like Disney's multiplane work she animated the characters that are seen in the foreground in sharp focus and things further away, like the back of her sets, are seen in soft focus. The illusion of depth makes the photography look impressive.

She showed photos of some of her voice actors and it turns out she used a large cast. The film's soundtrack includes 23 "songs," but it is not like a Broadway musical. Instead some of the voices are for mythological spirits. They function somewhat like a Greek chorus.

In 2015 Signe took on a really complicated production and unfortunately for her it turned out the complications resulted in unexpected major expenses.

She found out about one unexpected expense when she talked with SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists). She was shocked to discover that while the union accommodates low budget live action productions by letting producers pay actors less if the performance is in a major big budget feature, for animation that is going to be released theatrically in America there is only one pay rate -- *what Disney or Pixar pays*. To raise the money needed she turned to Kickstarter and kept her fingers crossed. Unfortunately, halfway through the campaign the chances of it succeeding looked dim. She hired a fund raising consultant who suggested several things including improving her messaging and advising her to be relentless in her Facebook postings. By doing that and other things she raised $132,737.00, more than what was needed.

Signe also needed several additional grants. Eventually she obtained help from the Guggenheim Foundation, and government agencies in Latvia and Luxembourg (she grew up in Latvia). Of course, there were major requirements she had to meet to get those funds. She had to produce a version of the film to be released in Latvia in that country's language. That meant having to hire a second voice cast to create another soundtrack. Luxembourg also required the post-production work they were funding to be done there.

Signe also found out that when you make a film that will take over six years to complete, there might just be other unexpected problems. Unanticipated labor needs were solved by taking on college interns. That meant she had to learn how to set up and run intern programs with two NY area colleges.

Sturgis Warner, Signe's co-producer told me later that their biggest problem was that, once you trained an intern and they get good at what they were doing, the internship would be over. In one case, they found funds to hire a really talented intern.

Another unexpected headache for Signe was dealing with a sprained ankle. That was a minor nightmare compared with figuring out how to keep the production on track during a pandemic.

So when Signe held a zoom gathering in late May there was much to celebrate. There were over 100 people at her gathering including a *who's who* of independent animation. Among the artists present were Bill Plympton, who helped Signe get her feet wet in the New York animation world when she moved her from Latvia almost 30 years ago. There were also several other animators present whose work I have long admired. They included Deborah Solomon, Ruth Lingford, Candy Kugel, and Joanna Quinn. Nik and Nancy Phelps were also there as was Yvette Kaplin (she produced Beavis and Butthead) along with Deanna Morse and Jim Middleton.

It really was a lovely event and I look forward to reporting news of the film's local, national, and European premieres. Hopefully I will also be writing about the film receiving numerous festival honors and other accolades.

Be sure to follow Signe's production adventures at - https://www.myloveaffairwithmarriagemovie.com

Editor's note:

Karl Cohen's 2000 link on animation history is a mere warm-up for his upcoming book on Otto Messmer - https://www.awn.com/animationworld/milestones-animation-industry-20th-century - and just a speck amid the volumes of material he has penned, covering the spectrum of analog to digital animation, ***and*** his *monthly* brain-filling newsletter for ASIFA-SF, which compiles international information on the whirl'd of the persistence of vision, a POV we can, and should, all support - http://asifa-sf.org/ for a sample of their activities.

Welcome to ASIFA Central News Update! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. Board members are the front line for our chapter and are in touch with the international ASIFA board.

Movers and Shakers in Regional Animation

Gary Schwartz and the Anibar crew

Gary Schwartz, Barmation, and Kosova

Gary materialized in Kosova in late July to serve as tutor to an "immersive workshop creating an animated promo for the festival itself!" It was described as "a multithreaded workshop, to try new things, and most importantly, to broaden your artistic horizon." This workshop took place through the 29th of July, in the city of Peja as part of the Anibar International Animation Festival that ran July 23rd to 30th this past summer. But, wait! Gary didn't take the journey alone - he joined Brooke Keesling with presentations, workshops, panel discussions, and special programs.

We are still trying to figure out what is going on in this photo from Gary Schwartz about "Barmation" - any guesses?

Brooke shared her experience working in the animation industry and gave practical advice on how to break through in the creative industry, and she is currently head of animation talent development at Bento Box Entertainment, where she works on *Bob's Burgers*. And, according to her Linked-In posting, Bento Box is *hiring!*

Tracy Miller-Robbins's no-fee film festival and blog, continues to develop while she works around the challenges of WordPress – https://noentryfeefestivals.com/author/noentryfeefestivals - treat Tracy to a cup of coffee while you're at it. It takes energy to maintain a blog!

Bri and Bob's ASIFA International Journal Articles May Be Sleeping with the Fishes

Whoops! The latest *ASIFA International* journals, originating from Austria, are lost on the east coast, somewhere in New Jersey. In this issue will be articles featuring the writing talents of ASIFA Central's Briana Yarhouse and Bob Swieringa. When they finally appear, get reprinted, or converted to pdf, look for Bri's discussion on the IAD with *Spiritus Mundi*, and Bob's short article, entitled: *"THE ASIFA PRIZE LAUREATES: 35 Years Honoring Contributors to Independent Animated Film."*

Home - Buster Keaton's Youthful Summers in Muskegon

Jim Schaub is two interviews away from completing the foundation footage for his documentary covering the adolescent years of this "stone faced" comedic genius. There may be animation involved, *nudge nudge, wink wink.*

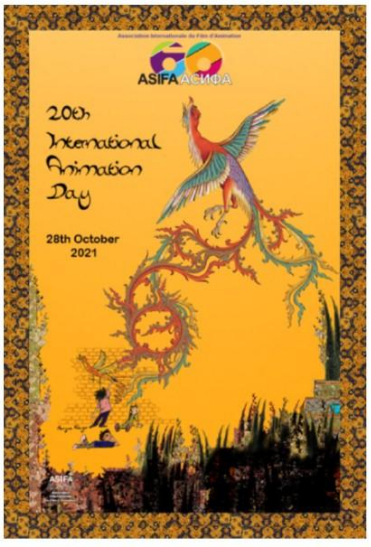
Updated Board of Directors

We had our official, double counted, electronically processed election of board members from the general membership:

Julie Goldstein - Our New President!
Stephan Leeper
Michael Long
Jim Middleton - Still Secretary!
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Deanna Morse
Chris Sagovac - Our new Vice President!
Bob Swieringa
Christine Veras - Our new Social Media Coordinator and Ambassador to other ASIFA Chapters! (2022)
Gretchen Vinnedge
Briana Yarhouse - Our New Treasurer and International IAD coordinator!

The current Membership Coordinator, Charles Wilson, will continue in this post to 2022 to allow for compilation of files and membership materials, before passing the baton to a new membership coordinator, to be announced at a later date.

International Animation Day - October 28!!!



Jim Middleton will be the coordinating the IAD program for ASIFA Central this year. When the program is assembled, it will be uploaded to a password-protected Vimeo file, accessible during a limited period around October 28. Over 60 international films are being made available for the event. Access requests will need to be directed to the IAD coordinator; because of geo-specific limitations requested by some of the participants, each request for access will be reviewed to prevent unauthorized access to the films. There. All the boring process rules are noted. It'll be a GREAT TIME FOR ANIMATION! Check our ASIFA.org website or Facebook page for further updates! Time to think of IAD PARTIES!

Christine Veras' latest group project

Christine remains thrilled that her short, collaborative film, *Horsepower*, is part of the official selection of the Cardiff Minifilm Festival in the new category "Twisted Tales." The collaborative animation project was produced during the lockdown in 2020.

Michael Long Hits the Festival Circuit

Island Hopping, the latest magic from the digital tablet of Missouri member Michael Long, is getting some deserved recognition through the miracle of Film Freeway's multiple off-ramps. The Indie Shorts Awards ran it in September, and the Grand Junction Film Festival gave it a screening earlier this month.

Passing Thoughts from Editor Jim Who Needs to Fill Up an Eighth of a Page - *America: The Motion Picture* on Netflix answers the question, "What sort of film would you get, if you asked a roomful of clueless 14 year old boys to write a history of the Revolution, and then gave the scrawled outline to some of the best world-wide independent animators?" Sadly, this jiggling beer-bonging blood fest is not nearly as much fun as an entry in the *Despicable Me* series, and is ultimately, rather exhausting. *What If...* on Disney+, however, works in the alternate Marvel universe by being what the Marvel universe actually is - a cartoon adventure. In the 30 minute episodes, there are no real-life actors striking embarrassing poses while immersed in a CG environment. The whole thing is a CG environment. And it's over in 30 minutes, not 3 hours! The producers of *American: The Motion Picture* should have taken this episodic approach. Next time - why the *Three Robots* in *Love, Death, & Robots* should have a series of their own.

FxF (Frame by Frame) Sampling the Springtime Saturday Seminars - get ready for 2022!

DePaul's gracious invitation to ASIFA Central members included access to these programs this past spring:

Joel Benjamin – Award-winning independent animator, presenting on his work and using Unreal for 3D animation production, and - *Character Animation Masterclass with DePaul Animator In Residence Brian Ferguson*, former Disney feature film character animator, who reminded all viewers that should you ever be employed by Disney, spell things out in the contract, such as keeping maquettes of your designs, because when you leave, you leave with the clothes on your back.

Coming up in the Next Issue - OIAF *(still dreaming of poutine)****, Still More ITFS experiences*** *(You want virtual experiences? We'll give you virtual experiences!)****, the SAS Conference*** *("I'm so inspired! I opened up my book proposal for the first time in three years!")****, Annecy*** *(Bien sur!)****, The Internet Archive Hits 25!*** *("Remember: when The Archives is down, the internet gets dumber."), and* ***The Search for the Lost McCay Homestead!***

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) Fall-Octoberish 2021 - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org
And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*
As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for Wham!, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com *or, for dull bloggery,* https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ASIFA Central

YES NO VEMBER MAYBE

Nearly Winter, M M X X I A D

I.A.D. 2021

*Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in **the world**. Our chapter was established in 1975. Because we are volunteers, we ask our board members to take on some many responsibilities such as social media coordinator, retreat co-organizer, web updates, ani-jam facilitator, party planners, and **more**. Our Board members are the front line for our Midwest animation chapter and are in touch with the international board.*

The NEW ASIFA Central Board for 2022

Our New President
Julie Goldstein

Our New Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Our New Treasurer
Briana Yarhouse

Our New Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador
Christine Veras

Our Same Old Secretary
Jim Middleton

Our Membership Coordinator
Charles Wilson

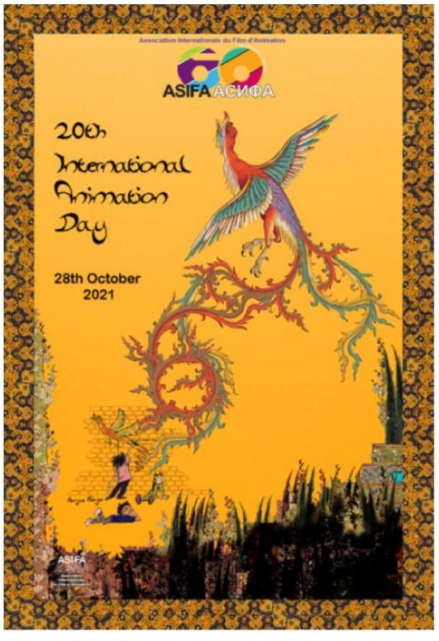
Our Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Bob Swieringa

IAD 2021 AFTERGLOW

International Animation Day commemorates the first public performance by Charles-Émile Reynaud of his Théâtre Optique at the Grevin Museum in Paris. That October 28, 1892 premiere represented the beginning of modern animation, and the date has been celebrated by animators with showings and performances since 2002, coordinated by ASIFA International and its many chapters around the globe.

ASIFA Central programmed the following selections as part of its celebration:

1. ***Toast for ASIFA*** - Deanna Morse, Christine Veras, Steve Leeper, et al
2. ***Two Little People*** - ASIFA Australia - Xin Li
3. ***Springtime in CoVid Land*** - Julie Goldstein
4. ***Mala*** - Too Otaghia Group - Iran
5. ***Large Scale Absurdities Volume 3 - "Docile Town"*** - Kimonos Animation Studio - Charalambos Margaritis - ASIFA Hellas
6. ***Horsepower*** - Christine Veras, et al
7. ***Notun Fasal*** (New Harvest) - Sovan Dutta - ASIFA India
8. ***Tchisti*** - Sarah Tabibzadeh - Iran
9. ***Candy Shop*** - Patrick Smith - ASIFA South
10. ***Espresso Doppio*** - Mika Koskinen - Finland
11. ***Eli*** - Jeff Martell - ASIFA South
12. ***Connecting*** - Melissa Bouwman
13. ***Happy Banana*** - Ali Raies - Iran
14. ***Animated Doodle*** - ASIFA Hellas
15. ***NamaStay*** - Margo Pierce - ASIFA South
16. ***time passing : passing time*** - Polly Wolly Doodlers (Jim Middleton, Deanna Morse, Gretchen Vinnedge, Suzanne Zack)
17. ***A Tale of Self-Preservation*** - Shannon Fleming - ASIFA South



"Thank you, Briana, for pulling this event and us together every year!!! Cheers to you!!!"

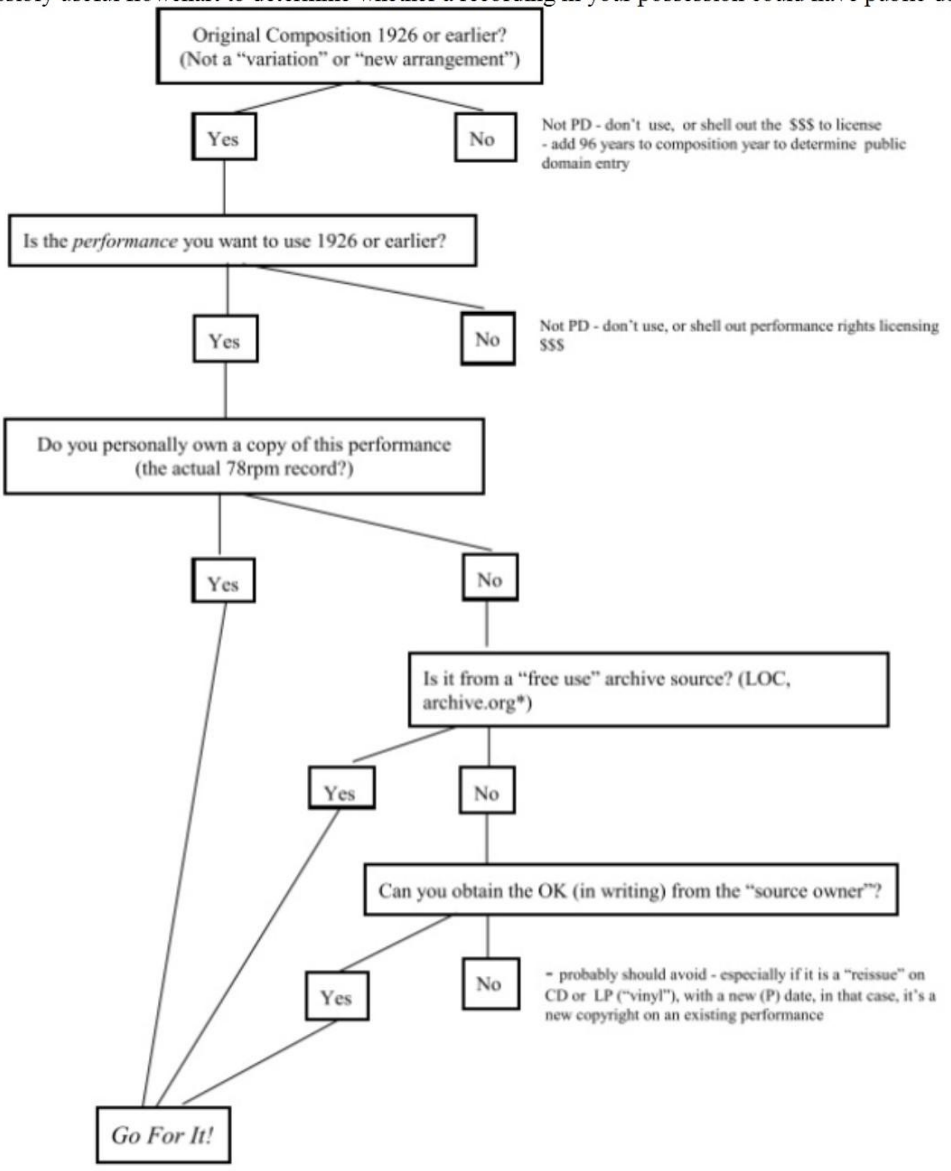
– Casandra Brewton-Johnson, Programming Director, ASIFA-South

"I am humbled by all the work that is done by you around the world to make a day like this possible. Thank you! Congratulations everyone! May your celebrations remind us that we are all collaborators in making the world a better place."

– Briana Yarhouse, IAD Coordinator for ASIFA International

Public Domain Update - Observations and Suggestions from your hmbl typst

Here is a possibly useful flowchart to determine whether a recording in your possession could have public domain (PD) status *in **2022***:



* archive.org material isn't all necessarily in the public domain - if there are "creative commons" (cc) stipulations, be sure to follow those. If the material there is after 1925, it may be posted "under the radar." If you are lucky to become commercially successful with using gray-area material, then the random owners of the "copyright" (hardly ever anyone associated with the initial artist, but someone who scooped up some ownership rights at some point) may annoy you with financial complications.

How this works - you have a piece of music from 1920, but your "old vinyl" recording is from 1965. The composition is in the public domain, but the performance/recording is not. Don't use! However, you find a 1920 composition and a 1923 recording of it, even though it's all gnarly, not in stereo, and "great grandpa old," chances are you'll be able to use it freely. However, if you have the 1923 recording from a 1990 CD, or "enhanced and restored" by someone else, the copyright on that old public domain material for that particular "performance" of it, *is the year of that restoration*. That's why it's important to have either the disc itself or permission from the owner of the disc to use the material. Fortunately, 1924-25 is the period where recordings mostly became electrically recorded (via microphone) and a very clean 78rpm record will have much stronger fidelity. Then run the recording through freeware *Audacity*'s effect > classic filters. (To further complicate things, some performance rights can vary from state to state, something that should be rectified in 2022 by setting all 1923 performances and earlier into the public domain. For some reason, Sony, created in 1946, possesses many recorded performance rights.)

More About *Horsepower* - by Christine Veras

Horse Power is a collaborative project in which participants were given only one frame to illustrate, using one stage of the galloping horse sequence from "The Attitudes of Animals in Motion," arranged for the zoëtrope by Eadweard Muybridge, and published in 1882. The project was developed during the pandemic lockdown, with participants collaborating remotely through the internet.

The final frames were played in sequence, and the rapid succession of the completely different images developed a vibrancy and energy that we wanted to explore further. So I proposed a twist in the original Muybridge animation through editing, creating a *glitch* in the image. That *glitch* can be interpreted in different ways – it could represent COVID shaking up our routine and the new possibilities of engagement, or the creative discovery and exploration of unique ways to engage and create animation in that context.

The short also explores the possibilities within the restricted frame for the continuation of perceptual motion. Participants had no idea how the final animation would appear, and the animation was only possible through the collective effort of each one of them.

The inspiration for the project came from two important sources: one was Dana Sink's animation *Power* (2017), and the other was the Johnny Cash Project that invited fans from all over the world to animate a single video frame for the music video, "Ain't No Grave," in 2010.

The Search for the McCay "Family Homestead" - by Jim Middleton

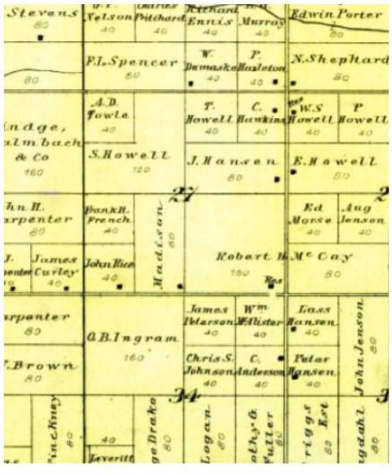
Driving through Michigan along M-46, one is likely to pass straight through the center of Edmore, scarcely noticing its blinking yellow light, yet alone the village itself. Like many villages serving a single use in the 19th century, here being lumber transportation via an awkward crossing of railway lines (one so sharp it made mention in *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*), it has faltered for an identity once its primary function faded, and as other large employers moved overseas. Currently its nearby farms grow potatoes for potato chips, and its slight glimmer of fiscal promise comes from its prescient early approval of marijuana dispensories - there are two - and selling industrial park properties for the creation of bud-sorting facilities. Its population of 1100 has hardly changed, but on average has certainly aged, in the past century.

However, in the 19th century, it attracted workers – for the lumber, for the railroads, for the ancillary needs (one of the earliest buildings was an *opera house* abutting the aforementioned crossroads - sing loud, vaudevillians!), and with workers came the need for homes, and that required a real estate agent.

Enter the McCay family, from Canada via Spring Lake, Michigan. Robert McCay's family included a precociously artistic son - *yes, you guessed correctly, it was that McCay, that Winsor McCay* - and while Robert and Winsor McCay's sister Mae are buried in Edmore, where Robert worked and served as notary, Winsor's mother was laid to rest at the "family homestead."

Public archives being what they are, and the maddening habit of school records for Winsor McCay being destroyed by fires in his youth - first in Spring Lake, then in Stanton - it took a while to track a location for this family homestead.

The homestead appears to have been nearer to Stanton, not the "potato center" of Edmore.



The earliest extant mention comes in a plat map of 1897 - indicating two large parcels assigned to Robert McCay (center right in illustration). The roads there are unnamed, but some landmarks (lakes and ponds) are to the west, and there is a small square indicating the house site. An overlay of an existing satellite map helped with specifics.

Ultimately, on West Klees Road northwest of Stanton, there appeared the remains of the 19th century McCay homestead. A newer home has been constructed nearer the road, but this is the barn site (photo at right). There were no visible markings of a burial site on the property; and, Michigan being an open carry state, wandering around private fields so near to deer season for the sake of animation archaeology seemed rather unwise. But the search continues! Watch this space!

Festival Flashbacks - Editor's Notes from the Society for Animation Studies (SAS) 2021 Conference

The middle of June this year was filled with Annecy and the SAS conferences. To complicate matters, the gatherings were nearly simultaneously conducted; fortunately, Annecy had a lot of its material asynchronous to the time zones, so one festival could blend with another. Also, Annecy has made its programs available to ticket holders until the end of 2021. *Très bien!*

SAS - in its discussion on abstraction films, 68% were found to be in 3D, 31% used a symmetrical construction, 81% were in color, and 28% used text as visuals. Topics ranged from Basque animation to comparing *Eros and Thanatos*, "life and death," as a sequential link representing energy. "Anthropormorphicilogical animation" of the 19th century is now, thankfully, condensed to "animism." The four-volume *Encyclopedia of Animation Studies* continues apace, with Volume I being *Geography and History,* II being *Techniques, Processes and Environments,* III being *Theories and Philosophies - including debates,* and IV (the number, not the therapeutic infusion) filling its pages with *Characters and Aesthetics,* presented primarily as case studies. It was at this point in the program that someone posted in the ZOOM chat space, "I'm so impressed. I opened up my book proposal for the first time in three years!"

"Toys and games are the prelude to serious ideas."
- Ray and Charles Eames

"Editing takes *forever*."
- Deanna Morse

ASIFA Central members *Melissa Bouwman, Steve Leeper, Deanna Morse, and Christine Veras* presented their discussion on "Art Technology and International Collaboration," where they went into the *Anizoomation* process in depth, from its conception to its final execution (see the short films *Toast for ASIFA* and *Connecting* as examples in the IAD 2021 ASIFA Central Showreel). See also - https://www.facebook.com/groups/342482260109209 (Anizoomation page) and https://www.deanimations.com (Deanna's dedicated section on Anizoomation).

ITFS notes - VR for entertainment, not for META marketing

Stuttgart is the festival that just keeps on giving. While extensively covered in the previous ASIFA Central newsletter, one more portion of May's ITFS festival is worth mentioning, especially with Facebook trying to convert us into the societies of *Minority Report* and *Ready Player One*. Portable VR game sets are already in place in Europe, with German engineers increasing the portability of the hardware. The big VR presenter at ITFS was YULLBE (https://www.yullbe.com) with pop-up sites in malls, and complete body suits at larger installations in order to "get over the barriers of life." So that every experience is not being thrown amid ghouls and orcs, they even have a rather attractive *Artiality* option if you wish to float amid Kandinsky and the works of French impressionists.

"Remain still and try to survive."
- advice on entering a VR-enhanced roller coaster or "drop experience"

From a technical standpoint, the current software requires 100G for 3 and ½ minutes of animation at 60fps, *plus* stereoscopic effects, at 6K x 6K resolution, adding 3D objects in the foreground. North America-based experiences with this level of sophistication are in Florida's *Final Fantasy* ride at Universal, and at Legoland near Winter Haven (former site of Cypress Gardens; doubtful that hoop skirts could make a smooth transition to the lego universe). Pop-up sites require seven technicians to run the experience - one envisions the Florida command center looking like something out of *Westworld* ("Where Nothing Can Possibly Go Worng").

Where cramming all this excitement in a 250 square meter space sounds like an incredibly attractive proposition for aspiring 3D animators, elaborate VR and immersive experiences do bring up another issue, recently discussed by Karl Cohen in the *November ASIFA-SF* newsletter, regarding the mental health implications associated with computer gaming.

Grand Valley State University

IAD - The Rotogravure Section - Preliminary images of IAD showings among ASIFA Central members

Images continue to come into the editorial offices of the ASIFA Central newsletter - if you have any surrounding your participation in IAD or any of its screenings, or even of a cool trip through Montana, feel free to *share!*

Simulcasting with ASIFA South

The Vinnedge Animation Collective

From the OIAF 2021 Notebook

September 24 introduced OIAF (Ottawa International Animation Festival, or for the Francophile, *Festival Internationale d'Animation d'Ottawa*) with the theme of "Talent 2.0 - The Future of Creativity," a topic one would hope to be limitless.

It began with the cheery greeting from Chris Robinson, OIAF director, declaring he was "excited to be back in Ottawa from my basement." Representatives from the Toronto studios chimed in, "There is so much work out there right now," adding the lack of skilled artists in the Toronto area is due to the draw from the game industry and big productions in the US. School programs are slow to keep up with the specialist skills needed in Canada *now*, with the *Unreal Engine* adaptation to the production pipeline becoming a real "game changer." If anything was reiterated at the opening discussions at OIAF, it was that students need to understand the reality of their future jobs - training doesn't end with graduation. *(Editor's note: if my experience is any indication, schools and universities are in constant search of accreditation for their programs, yet cannot muster the budget to maintain and update essential software and hardware. In the search for validation, resources are frequently overlooked.)* Further, after investing substantial tuition in their education, the students' first question is often, "How much money can you make here?" Smaller production houses lament that they don't have "Disney money," and even after sending some of their newly-hired staff to France for training, they are forbidden to force them to stay. As a result, "we don't train as hard as we'd like to." Even an unheated atelier can be expensive!

Ironically, many prospective Canadian employees work from their Canadian home for the Canadian health benefits, but are being paid by US production houses who benefit from having their talent across the border, and don't have to pay them benefits.

Random note: the OIAF had an attendance score for the events - your editor tied with Janet Pearlman at 1250 points (#82)! This is likely the only time *ever* that Janet Pearlman's name will appear next to your editor's.

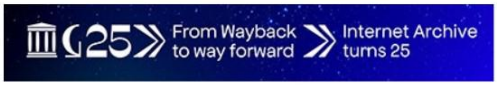
(Now I have to confess that here my notes get a bit *Augean* to decipher, but I think it may correlate with the series of Espresso Martini recipes that pepper several pages, none of which I *recall* trying out. But to quote Edgar Kennedy about the likelihood for alcohol being present, "I'll not deceive you. There is." For the sake of brevity, let's skip this part.)

Among the many highlights of this year's OIAF was its RISD Retrospective, broken into multiple sections for the sheer volume of high achievers, with many names that are now quite familiar in the animation field: Mike Overbeck, Pilar Newton-Katz, Seth McFarland, Karen Aqua (and much, much gratitude to Amy Kravitz)– and followed with a survey of and discussion by a self-described "time choreographer artist type," Jodie Mack. Ms. Mack builds abstractions around her textile and textural interests using stop-motion and multilayered soundtracks. Her recent feature production, *The Grand Bizarre*, is streaming on the Criterion channel.

BBC Sounds and *freesound.org*

The BBC sound effects library is still rather astonishing in its scope and remains free for non-commercial or educational use at https://sound-effects.bbcrewind.co.uk – however, with 16,000 files, it may seem a pale in comparison to https://freesound.org , which, by May of this year, reached *500.000 sound uploads*. They are celebrating this remarkable achievement, possible from uploads by thousands of people globally, with an upgrade to its server speed. *Freesound* is a *creative commons* (cc) site, moderated and reviewed by the site coordinators, and it's *free* (hence its name, double-d *duh*). It's a site worth the few moments to visit that'll expand to hours of exploration.

The Internet Archive Hits its 25th Anniversary



Begun in 1996, when the concept of a ten terabyte backup was considered adequate to contain the entire content of the internet, the Internet Archive has grown to encompass millions of archived internet pages along with sound, print, video, and even computer games, complete with period-specific emulators (you just can't run a Win 3.11 game on Windows 10). You can upload and download rather freely, with this caveat - they don't guarantee every file you download is in the public domain. The foundation for a lot of research is there, but you still need to do the research! Remember their slogan in the meantime, "When the archives is down, the internet gets dumber."

OIAF and Annecy Extend Their Access

The virtual experiences of the OIAF and Annecy festivals this year meant a lot of their material was recorded for "on demand" viewing by the participants (especially useful for Annecy with its five hour time difference for the Midwestern US). Both OIAF and Annecy have extended access to the files, for the benefit of 2021 pass holders who want to revisit or get virtual for the first time with many of the programs. Hybrids are expected for the lion's share of 2022 festivals, too, so if you miss the direct social interactions, you can find some comfort in the savings on travel expenses.

Annecy - until December 31, 2021; OIAF - until November 30, 2021. Use your existing log-in/passwords.

Briana Yarhouse and the HAUNT installation - October 29

In October, *The Standard - A Project Space* hosted a group art show featuring the theme, "HAUNT: What haunts *you?!"* (Suggestions included art critics, your ex, a burrito that had *you* for lunch, climate change, or life's challenges.)

Briana Yarhouse, International IAD Coordinator for ASIFA reported, "I have a sculpture piece that is going to be in this cool show! It is a casting of my head from 1983 when I spent a summer making a custom, full, over-the-head latex mask. Masks have been a central theme to my art and animation throughout my life. I grew up confused about my gender and hiding my feelings in shame about who I wanted to be, while puberty and testosterone affected my physical appearance. It was a very confusing time. It led to a lifetime of anxiety, fear, and self hate while hiding behind this mask. This year, I have started to take off the mask."

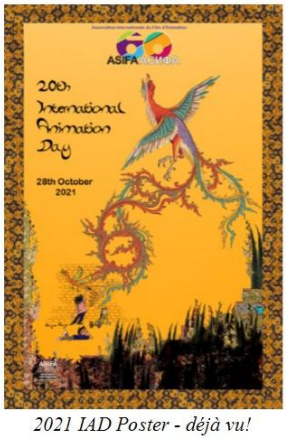
Interview with Maryam Mohajer, Poster Designer for This Year's IAD - *From iadasifa.net*
An Image of Hope, Imagination and Culture - by Bob Swieringa

In the lower corner, the child draws with chalk on a brick wall. Lines of color swirl across the wall, as the girl draws a simple phoenix, wings spread. But the colors burst from the bricks, spreading and curling, becoming the long intricate flowing tail feathers of the gorgeous Phoenix, rising colorfully across the page, into the air, free of the wall and its bricks.

Maryam Mohajer

This is what catches my eye as I view Maryam Mohajer's poster for International Animation Day 2021. The colors and shapes move across the space, leading the eye to the ASIFA logo at the top.

"All over the world, we're going through hard times…" Maryam said. "I wanted a sense of hope in my work; a miracle, a touch of magic even." The Phoenix, here, embodies that spirit, sharing it with the viewer. "Phoenix is a beautiful creature, presenting magic and hope in Persian culture." The hope, then extends to us and that link to culture is explicit here, as Maryam took the phoenix from an old Persian illustration by Muhammad Zaman ibn Haji Yusuf, the celebrated Persian artist (active 1670-1700).



2021 IAD Poster - déjà vu!

The children in the poster, drawing the Phoenix into being, contribute to the message Maryam builds with the images. "I've always been interested in working with children. I like the raw, honest, non-biased attitude that they bring with them and their sense of hope," Maryam said. And with hope flies imagination – "Most importantly their powerful, unlimited imagination always fascinates me," she adds. "It's a bit like animation itself in the sense that anything – and I mean anything – is possible."

Standing out in the poster as well is the font announcing International Animation Day. Maryam has said that she created the font based on the Persian Calligraphy *"Nastaliq."* The lines of the text curl and move mirroring the feathers of the Phoenix's tail. "Recently I've been experimenting with text, not only as a tool to represent a concept but also as an aesthetic form. When you're brought up with a certain language, it's so easy to think of the text only as means of communication, but when you look at it from a different point of view, you can see it's great potential as a visual form. It also adds a subtle touch of Persian identity to the work."

Maryam did not begin her exploration of art directly in animation, but came to it from painting, as her first BA in Iran. "I was told that my painting carried too much of a narrative and that it was leaning towards illustration," so she continued her studies in the UK, focusing on illustration and animation. "Once I tried my first animation project, which was a walk cycle, it was clear to me that I did not want to do anything else."

"There's so much life in animation," she added. "The idea of creating a whole universe that moves, lives and breathes is just magical to me. Nothing compares to it."

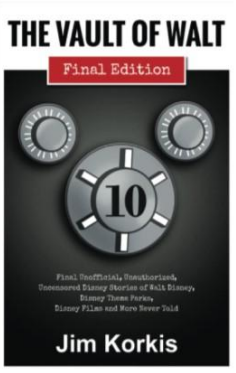
The Last "Vault of Walt" from Jim Korkis

Subtitled the "Final Unofficial, Unauthorized, Uncensored Disney Stories of Walt Disney, Disney Theme Parks, Disney Films and More Never Told," Jim Korkis has (sadly) wrapped up his series on The Happiest Place on Earth and all that it entails. *The Vault of Walt #10* is one of the 34 books he has penned *since 2012* about Disney, the theme parks and its employees, collected from personal interviews and astonishing archival access.

Detroit, 2013: Steve Stanchfield, That Poppins Woman, Jim Korkis, and a lost animation instructor

This volume hops from the "First Official Walt Disney Biography," to back-stories about *Dick Tracy* and Robin Williams, to unrealized dreams for the Magic Kingdoms, to the unique presence of Dumbo's mother, to the ongoing controversies surrounding Jessica Rabbit.

His keyboard must be very, very tired. This and his other literary gems are at www.ThemeParkPress.com . Buy lots!



A Quick Note from ASIFA-Japan and ASIFA's 60th anniversary celebration:

"As for ASIFA-Japan, we will be holding this year's "IAD 2021 in KYOTO" to celebrate our 60 years as well. It will be held on November 23rd, at Kyoto University of the Arts, and we will also celebrate ASIFA-Japan's 40th anniversary together.

Please visit our official pages, as follows:

- IAD 2021 in KYOTO: https://asifa.jp/animationday/international-animation-day-2021en/iad2021kyoto/
- 60th anniversary program (13 films by ASIFA-Japan members): https://asifa.jp/animationday/international-animation-day-2021en/iad2021kyotoprogram1/

Best wishes, Sayoko"

Guest Essay: "HOW HARMFUL ARE THE VIDEO GAMES THAT DEVELOP COMPUTER GAME ADDICTION?" by Karl Cohen (from ASIFA-SF November issue)

Until August of this year I paid no attention to the video game industry. Suddenly I was reading about China cracking down on the game industry to combat child addiction to their products. The $120 billion game industry was calling for parents, game developers and manufacturers to work together to combat the scourge. The stories were scary enough for the stock market value of game companies to start to tumble, up to 10% in just a few hours. What was going on?

To find out, I read lots of news reports that proclaimed, "No industry, no sport, can be allowed to develop in a way that will destroy a generation." Several articles called the games "spiritual opium." Chinese authorities were labeling e-sports and games the "opium of the mind" and calling digital games "electronic drugs."

They called for more restrictions to prevent greater widespread addiction among children. One article claimed children were spending food money on games, were playing them for seven hours a day, resulting in their grades in school dropping.

Even *Tencent*, a major game developer, responded by saying new measures were needed to protect minors. They wanted to show they were socially responsible, but they only suggested weak measures for their most popular game, *Honor of Kings*. They supported stopping young kids under 12 from spending money on the game. They also suggested limiting their playing time to under 1.5 hours on weekdays and to 2 hours a day on holidays and weekends.

Honor of Kings character

The Chinese government responded to Tencent's suggestions by issuing much tougher restrictions. Online gamers under 18 are now limited to only one hour on Friday through Sunday and on holidays. Play must be between 8 and 9 PM and is not permitted on Monday through Thursday. Also facial recognition is becoming required to insure the player is 18 or older. That is to prevent children from using the IDs of adults to sign on. BBC news estimates China has "tens of millions of young gamers." Tencent has also developed a facial recognition system to limit late night gaming by children.

It is obvious the company admits their product is dangerous, so why don't they take it off the market?

The World's Most Lucrative Market

Honor of Kings was the world's top grossing game in 2019 and 2020. Tencent reported it had the equivalent income of $22.7 billion in revenue from smartphone games and $6.9 million from PC games and gaming is just part of Tencent's income. It had a total revenue of $74 billion. Gaming has been called "the world's most lucrative market."

Another character in *Honor of Kings*

Wikipedia says, "*Honor of Kings* is a multiplayer online battle arena developed by TiMi Studio Group and published by Tencent Games for the iOS and Android mobile platforms for the Chinese market."

The BBC says the crackdown by Beijing is based on a reaction to the rapid growth of capital and technology and the potential adverse effect on the well-being of the country's young generation. The government is also concerned about "celebrity fan culture and private tutoring." The government is trying to create "positive energy" and restore "correct values."

Game companies try to develop ways to addict players. They try to make the games as exciting as possible to entice players to return. They offer incentives to return including daily or weekly use-it-or-lose-it quests, login rewards for continuous streaks of play, season passes and other incentives. They want to dominate the lives of their players.

Computer Game Addiction is a Serious Problem in the US as Well as in China

Playing computer games is fun for millions of people. When that pleasure becomes excessive it can be annoying to others, but it doesn't necessarily qualify as a computer game addiction unless other areas of a person's life become adversely affected. Unfortunately, that is happening to players in many parts of the world.

An industry of health professionals has developed to try and help those with this serious compulsive disorder. It is now recognized as a mental addiction in the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (2018). The lure of e-sports is quite enticing to some people. E-sports players who get involved with competitions can be rewarded with money and titles – such as being called a "pro." Successful individuals and teams can achieve fame. Unfortunately, some people wanting to be great players say they spend 8 to 12 hours a day in training.

Some of the afflicted play multiplayer games. Some of these are designed to not have a fixed ending so new players can join in and others can leave or take a break when desired. Games may also have levels of achievement that encourage you to try and rise in your ranking. Players of some games can earn "wealth" simply based on the numbers of hours they have spent playing. There is even a concern that if you stop playing you may fall behind other players.

Another kind of lure are the gaming programs that adopt gambling concepts. Instead of using chips some games let you buy or win things to put in your "loot box." Other types of games including e-sports have people getting excited by betting money or things called "skins." There are lots of other ways to wager online that don't seem to be like old fashioned gambling. Software designers are on the search for new innovative concepts to get you involved.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a computer addiction include not being able to quit, being upset or angry when you can't play, thinking a lot about playing and believing that playing makes you feel better. Other signs that someone has a serious problem include the loss of other things you used to enjoy, having trouble with your job, relationships or schoolwork, and lying about the amount of time you spend on gaming. And there are physical symptoms that can develop from a sedentary lifestyle.

Treatment

Treatment programs at mental health clinics exist in the United States, China and other nations for people who spend way too much time doing things like playing games, web surfing and even chatting. The treatments range from group therapy to one on one counseling and outdoor experiences called Wilderness Therapy. There are also more severe interventions including shock treatment and in China militaristic "boot camps."

China has also established legal regulations. Prior to establishing the most recent rules, they had outlawed online gaming in 2019 for kids under 18 between the hours of 10 PM and 8 AM. There were also restrictions established in 2017 limiting the numbers of hours a kid could play on Tencent games.

If you type into your computer's search bar "video game addiction treatment" you will find dozens of businesses offering the public their services. You may also find interesting statistics like "as many as 12% of boys and 7%t of girls are addicted to gaming."

The number of kids playing video games is said to be 70 to 80%, and 41% say they spend too much time playing video games. In the United States, spending money on video games grew by 30 percent in the second quarter of 2020, to a record $11.6 billion.

Should the Animation Community and Public be Made Aware that Computer Game Addiction can be Harmful?

I believe computer game addiction can be harmful to the player and possibly others close to that person. I don't know what to suggest except that friends of someone with the condition might do the necessary research and try to convince the player to understand the problem and seek help. Animation can be a great art and I hate seeing it used in a way that harms others.

Notes and Observations from Yr Hmbl Typst

The alarm is worth sounding, and while it may ring like an echo of earlier warnings - "TV will rot your brain!" "Comic books lead to violence!", or my father's favorite, "MAD Magazine isn't even a damn magazine!" – it now seems an apt observation on the general lack of critical thinking these days.

I remember in the 1990s, visiting Disney World surrounded by kids staring at their Game Boys. Acres of visual distraction, and they were glued to a monochrome postage-stamp size screen? Now, living in *Ruritania*, I see the few still walking around bent over their phones, creating a population of scoliotic Quasimodos. I can somewhat understand it in Edmore, but at DisneyWorld? But, oh wait, they have an ap for that. Sorry. Forgot. Should have invested in that. Could have retired earlier.

So today with the ancillary addiction to social media, constant infusions of misinformation, eyes riveted upon phones, and adding the impact of "pandemic lockdowns" with protracted self-enclosure - what could we expect? There remains a psychological need for contact with others, but what sort of contact? Virtual (or un-virtual) vacations? Visceral terror with imagined ghouls? There are so many monsters out there already, and they're not all viral.

Regarding International Classification of Disease (ICD) codes – if you have ever been to a clinician, and you needed insurance billing taken into account, your clinician generally had to provide an "ICD" code. Your humbl typst is old enough to recall with the ICD-***9*** was the gold standard, but bureaucrats equate that simple time with an era of leeches and calomel. *There are 72,184 ICD-10 codes for 2020 compared to 71,932 for 2019, according to the American Health Information Management Association.* And they're working on #11 already.

ICD-*11* Codes for Gaming Disorder are
6C51: Gaming disorder
6C51.0: Gaming disorder, predominantly online
6C51.1: Gaming disorder, predominantly offline; bipolar disorder must not be present
6C51.Z: Gaming disorder, unspecified
QE22: Hazardous gaming

The mind reels - and there's an ICD-11 code for THAT! *6B43* Adjustment Disorder!

According to ICD-11, *Hazardous gaming* refers to a pattern of gaming, either online or offline that noticeably increases the risk of harmful physical or mental health consequences to the individual or to others around this individual.

The pattern of gaming often persists in spite of awareness of increased risk of harm to the individual or to others.

(Ultimately, every one in society will have an ICD code, with the possible exception of those who create them.)

Will the industry change? C'mon - look at those numbers. $120 billion? Their goal is to surpass *$200 billion* by the end of 2023! Where "META" wants us to go full into *Ready Player One* mode (for impact of cinema fiction, revisit *Minority Report* sometime, then think about your last TV weather report), there will be lip service for their concern, just as casinos add a little disclaimer that *if you or any one you know is addicted...yadda yadda yadda...* Better, in the meantime, to check your monthly gaming subscription fees for games you haven't played in months or years, because that's a part of their business model, too. Or maybe just push your concerns aside and invest for an early retirement yourselves. Remember, you never profit by buying a product, you profit by investing in it and finding another sucker to buy the product!

And the response from academe? Well, I can only speak for my recent years in Kalamazoo, but colleges seem to be dumping resources into and finding money for "e-sports programs," including remodeling buildings for arenas and setting up intercollegiate competitions. I speak of this with some level of irritation, as a former clinician at a student health center facing constant scrutiny for likely outsourcing, as was recently accomplished in nearby Ypsilanti. I guess it's just a matter of "follow the money." At least they're always adding counselors, and *they* know ICD-11! https://wmich.edu/esports

Grumpy (but still hmbl) typst out!

Well, that's 2021 in newsletters for ASIFA Central. Yr hmbl typst will be handing things over to Sparrow for her insights on the holidays for you poor folks who still get snail mail. 2022 will start up with a summary of IAD adventures, information on other ongoing projects, and talking points from our monthly ASIFA Central Coffee Breaks, because after all, caffeine loves us and wants us to be productive and happy!

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) November (Nearly Winter) 2021 - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org
And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - *https://asifa.net* *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*
As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at *jim.middletonrx@gmail.com* *or, for dull bloggery,* *https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com*

ASIFA Central

The Official ASIFA CENTRAL
Laurel-Laden NEWSLETTER
for February
2022 (MMXXII)

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Bob Swieringa

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest - US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators ***in the world****. This chapter was established in 1975. As volunteers, our board members take on many responsibilities - social media coordinator, retreat co-organizers, web updaters, ani-jam facilitators, party planners, and* ***more****. Our Board Members serve the front line for our Midwest animation chapter and are in touch with the International ASIFA board.*

In This Issue - IAD, Silenced Drawing Boards, Revisiting Deanna's Festival Film Clichés, Virtual Coffee Breaks, GVSU *Lanthorn* and ArtPrize, Public Domain Update, Down the Rabbit Hole of the Film Freeway (I), What Qualifies as an IMDb Festival?, Film and Archival Transfer Services (I), Member Award Frenzy and International News *along with Other Vital Announcements squeezed into these pages!*

For 2022:
With Resolutions, one should aspire, not merely perspire
(and not be in a hurry to touch the turquoise porcelain ball)

"Make your interests gradually wider and more impersonal, until bit by bit the walls of the ego recede, and your life becomes increasingly merged in the universal life. An individual human existence should be like a river — small at first, narrowly contained within its banks, and rushing passionately past rocks and over waterfalls. Gradually the river grows wider, the banks recede, the waters flow more quietly, and in the end, without any visible break, they become merged in the sea, and painlessly lose their individual being."

- Bertrand Russell

Most Incongruous
Peculiar Pellicule Festival
2011

Quarter Semi Finalist
Fractionated Film Fest
2020

Scratchiest Soundtrack
Your Check Cleared FunFest
2008

(Note - *satire* - not actual film festivals)

Deanna Morse's Festival Clichés (from 1998)

Non-Scientific Observations on Common Elements in Animation Festival Entries

Common ways of starting films

in the clouds, in the morning
an alarm clock wakes up the protagonist
in the night as the day begins
in a starfield
using a newspaper to reveal the plot points
films that take a long time to get started, or too much time establishing a "mood" before a story kicked in

Common styles and themes

animation "reality" films, animating to documentary sound tracks
the effect of television on little babies
live action and animation intercut
men in prison, men in chains
dream diaries
people become insects, dragonflies
people get trapped in a computer game
bank robberies
old men alone in houses
dark stories

Recurring visual elements

big lips, men with big cheeks, buxom ladies
characters with two different sized eyes
blood shot eyes
skulls
a face turns into a gorilla face
cowboys
circus
constellations -clouds, rain
mountains and water in computer
mermaids
castles, seashores, sand
spaceships, space shuttles
people with their heads cut open
clocks and watches, gears
flies and maggots, spiders
dragons, cows, birds, bees, butterflies
cats and dogs, lizards
saws for hands
computers, televisions, radios
shark fins
teeth as a decorative element in a scene
checkerboards, stripes

Bri Yarhouse to Helm Animation Program at Michigan's Famed Interlochen Center for the Arts

Michigan's Interlochen Center for the Arts has been creating "transformational experiences for artists and arts enthusiasts of all ages," since its founding in 1928 by Joseph Maddy. Today, it is one of the nation's first and foremost institutions dedicated to the development of young artists. To its celebrated list of educators they will soon be adding our IAD coordinator and ASIFA Central treasurer, Bri Yarhouse, as Director and developer of its new expanding animation program.
Tell your friends! Tell your neighbors! Send your kids!!
https://www.interlochen.org

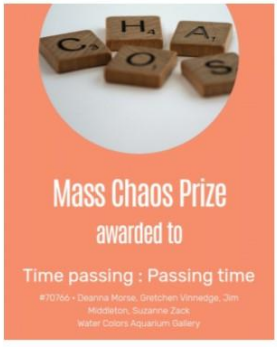
ASIFA 60th Anniversary Issue Features Bri Yarhouse and Bob Swieringa

Has it been 60 years already? Volume 32 of the *ASIFA Magazine* contained Yarhouse's *Sharing, Exchanging and Changing the World*, celebrating the opportunities in ASIFA's International Animation Day (IAD) - last October's day was extended into weeks to permit chapter participation under another international event - the CoVid pandemic. Nonetheless, since 2019, IAD has been an enthusiastic romp through new, international animation. Bri also coordinated an additional celebration in 2020 involving ten chapters in a united theme by Yeats, "a universal memory ... that inspires the poet or writer," which she termed *Spiritus Mundi*. These "collective unconscious" events served as the foundation of animated activities to emphasize the humanity amid our many recent conflicts and uncertainties. Bob Swieringa of GVSU examined the 41 *ASIFA Prize Laureates* over the past 35 years, from Kihachiro Kawamoto in 1985 to Signe Baumane in 2019. ASIFA has expanded its recognition over these years, including archivists, historians, and individuals who promote the field of animation.

The issue itself had adventures - the first shipment of the print edition made it from Europe to the east coast of the US, where they all mysteriously vanished, in cryptic, mystic, unexplained circumstances. Were there secret messages in the report on the OIAF? Did editor Chris Robinson encrypt RMP positions into the space between frames on page 29? Is *The Art of Wasting Time* a bit of banned theology in the wastelands of Uqbar? We'll have to wait for the movie...

(Note - more satire)

ASIFA Central Members Chalk Up Awards at ArtPrize



The Polly Wolly Doodlers (*Jim Middleton, Deanna Morse, Gretchen Vinnedge, and Suzanne Zack*) didn't make off with any *monetary* awards from ArtPrize, but they certainly had their share of fun prizes to populate their group account. They look forward to more fun in 2022, although it will be hard to top the beautiful venue of the Watercolors Aquarium Gallery.

Time Passing: Passing Time also caught the eye of ace star reporter, Ayron Rutan, from GVSU's award winning *Lanthorn* newspaper, edited by the equally magnanimous Zack Goodrow (*He loves podcasting, writing movie reviews and the Chicago Bears.* It's true! I saw it on the internet!)

Deanna Morse's Festival Clichés continues
More Non-Scientific Observations on Common Elements in Animation Entries
(from 1998)

Common Camera Movements
The camera goes into the mouth and away
The camera goes into the eye
We look through a spy-glass

Common Sounds
Burping
Solo Piano
Background sounds of computers, televisions, radios
Classical Music, Sonatas
Doors that trigger a sound when they open
Farting

Deanna explained in 1998:
"This is not to suggest that all of these things need to be avoided. We selected films for competition that shared these common elements. Some of them even won prizes! However, films that had a fresh style or characters grabbed our attention more quickly."

The list came after she viewed 1147 entries in the 1998 Hiroshima Animation festival, taking notes during the three weeks of pre-festival screenings. *"We saw a wide variety of films and techniques - drawn, puppet, clay, paint on class, CG, timelapse, image processed, cel, mixed media, sand, drawn on film... I thought I could make some real concrete statements about the nature of the work being done in animation today."* Sometimes the things that recurred were *"just oddball stuff. For instance, we screened two films in a row that featured angry babies, then two about snowmen. Two films used the same title! (It didn't matter - we selected one for the competition; it won an award.)"*

How magnanimous are these inseparable pair of journalists (rumor has it they'll soon be starring in a roadshow version of *The Front Page* - it's *true!* I read it in an online newsletter!)? They agreed to let us reprint the article *in toto* (yes, *and toto, too!)* in our not nearly-as-award winning, but equally appreciative of filling as much space with good news as possible publication.
That article appears on page four! So close, so close... you can nearly see it from here.

Polly Wolly Doodling at Watercolors Aquarium Gallery

by Ayron Rutan, for GVSU's Lanthorn, a meticulous newspaper edited by Zack Goodrow - 2022

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the lives of many faced a drastic change. The very way in which each and every one of us operated was challenged as we were forced into our homes for extended periods to remain safe from the clutches of the Coronavirus. With this change came panic, depression, boredom, and the exploration of new interests by many.

Each one of these themes was explored by GVSU Film Professor and a team of animators from around the country at this year's ArtPrize showcase in a short film entitled "Time Passing: Passing Time".

The team was composed of Zack and fellow animators Deanna Morse, Gretchen Vinnedge, and Jim Middleton. The collaboration was born out of a desire to connect during the initial lockdowns.

"There were three animators [Morse, Vinnedge, and Middleton] that lived in different parts of the country," Zack said. "During the pandemic, they started to connect with each other. They decided to create animations with a theme and every month they would meet and share what they were making."

As the lockdowns progressed, ArtPrize was approaching. This gave Morse, Vinnedge, and Middleton an idea to try and do something with the animations that they had created. This opened up the door to Suzanne Zack, who was asked to serve as an editor for the team's project.

"We started meeting through Zoom, and we had conversations about the theme, what connected all of it, and why it was important," Zack said. "We talked about how the pandemic was so isolating, and that having this conversation through animation was a way to connect, keep spirits alive, and keep community."

The project was a true collaboration of talents, with each animator contributing their own distinct theme and style.

"They shared with me what they made, and it was really clear that through their art they were expressing the emotions that we were all going through during the various stages of the pandemic," Zack said.

The collection featured 5 segments, "Lockdown Shockdown", "Pandemic Potluck", "Time Passing", "Passing Time", and finally "Stepping Out". Each segment told its own story and conveyed a particular emotion felt during the pandemic.

"Lockdown Shockdown" expressed the sheer panic that ensued as the news of the virus began to travel. Businesses, schools, and essentially all social life was put on hold and we were all confined to the walls of our homes. The animation shows a man roaming abandoned streets until what appear to be jail cell bars enclose the screen. "Pandemic Potluck" highlighted the culinary endeavors of those on lockdown. Many of us fell victim to boredom eating, while others learned to cook as a way to pass the time.

The next two segments, and project's namesake, "Time Passing" and "Passing Time" featured stop-motion and timelapse animation styles that depicted images of the segment's theme: time passing.

Finally, the end of the film shows "Stepping Out" - a triumphant outro signalling the end of the lockdowns and communities finally rejoining and rejoicing with one another.

The film was shown at the Water Colors Aquarium Gallery behind a fish tank in an effort to give the project an underwater feel, as well as to have the colors of the animations pop behind the water.

"They had this very large aquarium with these Cichlid fish and we put a monitor right behind it," Zack said. "The fish were reacting to our piece. During certain scenes they would dart towards the screen and it was really an experience."

Overall, the film was received positively by ArtPrize attendees as well as Water Colors' everyday patrons. Zack said that experiencing its showing with the other animators in person was the highlight of it all.

"What was great was that we all came together," Zack said. "We were all in different parts of the country, but we came together for ArtPrize and it all had this added effect of us being together while our piece was being shown."

While short and abstract, "Time Passing: Passing Time" took a deep dive into the thoughts and emotions of those stuck inside during lockdown, and ultimately empowered its animators through connection and collaboration with expert editing work by Grand Valley's own Suzanne Zack.

But Wait - Keep Reading - or Lookit the Purty Pitchers!

Awards! Recognition! Pot Roast! *(Ok, maybe not the pot roast)*

Just one of many *real* awards for *Ethereal Shift*

Julie's Goldstein's film, *Ethereal Shift*, grew nearly in front of our eyes at board meetings and ZOOM coffee breaks. A surreal combination of found film and sounds, it has been gaining laurels from festivals that, interestingly enough, have names including Paris! Vesuvius! Adbhooture! It hearkens to her days of sculpting and moves as a remote reverie amid layered thoughts and telephonic sounds. The trailer is on the book of faces at -

https://www.facebook.com/tellsthestory
and the audience cannot get enough of Julie!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JI-WUAB45BA

Gary finding fun everywhere

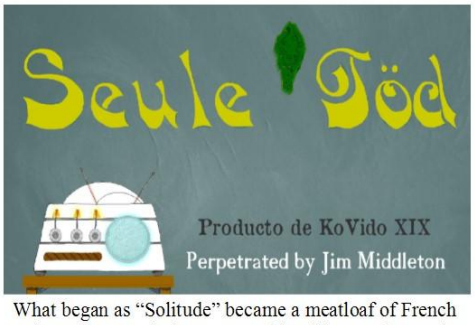
Gary Schwartz' production of *Stain* grew from a three-day intensive workshop at the art school at the Flint Institute of Art last November. It has earned some serious hits online, but continues to pop back up and ask for more! Here is its dynamic presence on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXGvxOlvatw

A moment of contemplation in Michael Long's *Island Hopping*

Michael Long's film, *Island Hopping*, has also been dancing amid fleche and feint, prête for a riposte and en guard for new engagements in the vast *piste* of Film Freeway.

Moral of the film: Be sure you obtain a prenup with any interactions involving mermaidens. They're Pisces, you know (they work for scale).



What began as "Solitude" became a meatloaf of French and German translating to something like "Only Death" or "My toes are coming out of my soles." Your choice. Either one is right.

Yr humbl typst's chemo recovery project, *Seule Töd,* remains a tribute to the First Law of Thermodynamics with its tale of a man seeking a shave, but ending up with a case of unicorns. Balloons, cookies, and some peppermint flavored tornadoes appear in the process. It has also become a training film of sorts to examine the inner -workings of Film Freeway. So far, it has received mention from a dozen of FF's festivals, but none of them have sent any cookies. Or unicorns. However, I am growing enough hair these days to have a nice, satisfying shave.

The Esperanto Dignity Project has begged for a better translator in any future productions. They have suggested using Klingon for the proposed sequel.

NuqDaq 'oH puchpa''e'!!!!!

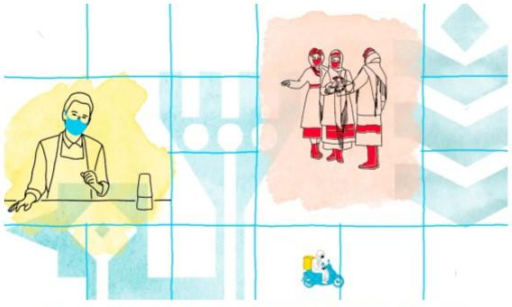
An Honest-to-Goodness, Face-to-Face, Film Festival!
The CMIFF in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, February 2022

This really happened! Live with people and everything!

CMIFF - fantastic! A face to face film festival on a nearby campus! So, of course, the weather reminded everyone (well, me, 'cuz it's all about me) that Mt. Pleasant is in *Michigan*, and Michigan's temperament toward weather is, especially in February, *ambivalent.* M-46 runs west to east, and so did the winds on the weekend of 19th, with some snow. Well, *some* in the context of Michigan. There was ice, too, but it remained under the snow where it wouldn't be a visual distraction, just an added attraction for a more entertaining trip. Some rural counties don't really plan for taking care of poor weekend weather, so the concept of a beneficial inorganic chemical reaction involving salt and ice didn't occur until half-way there, where the midpoint town (Alma) still had some science majors on the road commission. Indeed, they used the salt of the earth to reveal the earth beneath the salt! So I made it to the CMU campus, even a bit early, for the short animation film showcase. Fifteen others braved the elements to enjoy this segment of CMIFF, and fun it was. I had a nice chat with with Mike Martone (*The Echo*), enjoyed the energy of the volunteers distributing tickets, and discovered that the soundtrack for *Seule Töd* needed about a 6x boost in volume. Drat those codecs! But that's why these face-to-face events are so necessary.

Steve Leeper's class was well represented that afternoon. May Napora's clean and disciplined style was a genuine delight, and there was a sweet shout out to the novel-turned-flipbook style of animator Marie Pacou, known for phenakistascope umbrellas (find her online and them online - they are amazing - here's a clip: https://vimeo.com/238022172).

My personal favorite film was *Come Outside, Masha* - drawn with a clean line and, well, on the eve of a Russian invasion of Ukraine, so timely for a contemporary animated story based in Kyiv to appear in a midwestern US film festival.



"Come Outside, Masha," Uulia Shalimova, Ukraine

I had to bow out after this brief visit, because the wind was changing, and my little Honda wanted to spin donuts in the parking lot (sorry, Steve, that was me). It was great, nonetheless, to watch films on a screen for the first time since *Knives Out* in December, 2019.

Virtual Coffee Breaks, Still Caffeinated

An eight o'clock kick start, three I gulp down
And a stiff black 10 o'clocker makes my heart pound
Five cups of instant ought to get me through noon,
But I gotta lay back so I don't peak too soon –
I'm a cuppa cuppa cuppa cuppa cuppa cuppa Caffeine Zombie!!
I've got percolator eyes and a drip grind mind
Freeze dried nerves and a flavor crystal spine
No Sanka, thank-ya! It's CAPPUCCINO TIME!
I'm a no-doze daddy with my java mug at nine
I'm a cuppa cuppa cuppa cuppa cuppa cuppa Caffeine Zombie - NOSE DIVE!
I'm a cuppa cuppa cuppa cuppa cup...
Momma - everything's turning black!
I can't wait to get up in the morning and have some nice - COFFEE!!!!!
(Poorly recollected routine from Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre, ca 1985)

But Whoa! There's MORE to the Coffee Breaks Than That! We're talking LINKS!!!

First, we have a Morning Coffee Animation by Tracy Miller-Robbins - an uber-widescreen window projection and installation at MSU:
https://vimeo.com/130596937
https://vimeo.com/148787609

Jessi Meliza from Chicago gave a clipart resource in our January gathering:
https://shakespeareillustration.org/

AI material popped in during the discussion as well:

http://waifu2x.udp.jp/

And a Max Ernst collage book effectively created the "proto-comic" - *Une Semaine de Bonté* consists of five surrealist collage pamphlets, divided into seven parts, one for each day of the week. Chris Sagovac was very generous at the gathering:
https://www.thecollector.com/exploring-max-ernst-surrealist-visual-novel/
http://www.all-art.org/art_20th_century/ernst_Max1.html
And for the latest regarding SAS gatherings and conferences:
https://www.tees.ac.uk/minisites/sas/index.cfm

Michael Long provided a reminder to keep the *Public Domain Review* on your browser's speed dial - who can't use more Dûrer sketches of pillowcases:
https://publicdomainreview.org/

From Illinois Pop Art Collector Orrin Scott came resources to work on code and *Unsolved Mysteries Of Warhammer 40K* - I have *so* much to study...
https://gdquest.github.io/learn-gdscript/
https://youtu.be/VchkiTUisu8

Globe-hopping Deanna Morse was on a plane to Hawaii, but she provided us with images to show how miserable her time there was:

She did, however, provide us with some fun vacation chats:

"I had an interesting conversation with a guy at the Academy Archive today. He said that Coppola and some other hard hitters went to Kodak around 1982, because all the prints were fading - like *Mean Streets* - after only a decade or so, and they threatened to use Agfa or Fuji instead. As a result, Kodak changed their print process chemistry - and he can tell the difference of films from a one year period. 1982 - deteriorated. 1983 - stable.

"I was complaining a bit that people told me my prints from around that time had been turning red... like a sunburn.

"Thank you Coppola and heavy hitters, for making Kodak change their ways!"

She was also approached by the Academy archivists about getting her films and material for their archive. Her prolific production over the years, and several recent moves, have resulted in many original drawings and associated assets being lost or diffused among the masses (ok, I have a couple of those sketches). She said there was an audible gasp at the other end of the line.

"Oh those archivists! You gotta love 'em!"

Jim Dives Down the Rabbit Hole of Film Freeway, with a Laurel and Hardy Handshake
more blather from Yr Hmbl Typst

A recent alert from Pencho Kunchev from ASIFA Bulgaria expedited some notes assembled by yr hmbl typst from the past several months:

"I recently received a message from an American film festival saying that in the last two years, during the world pandemic, about 4,000 new film festivals have appeared, most of them fake, "playing irresponsibly with the feelings and illusions of filmmakers."

I have been building a spreadsheet of my experiences using FilmFreeway and their access to innumerable film festivals. As it had been over 12 years since having any festival interactions, I went through the listings, looking mainly for some level of viewer exposure (and likely proximity to people I know who'd be likely to pop in and watch) and before long, had over 40 festivals logged in to be annoyed by my recently completed film, *Seule Töd*.

Some of the excitement was waiting for notification of being selected for the festival - the day approaches, the day is here, the day passes, then *two* days pass, then *three*, then the date is changed by the festival. No notice. It just gets knocked ahead a day, three days, a week later. No explanation.

So I went back to the list of submissions. There was a new button called "transparency" in the listing. Also, there were other buttons for the festival website, its Instagram link, its Facebook link. And an inconsistent listing on festival coordinator, marketer - in short, there was a trend for some of these festivals to be rather - *suspicious*.

My lovely wife Anne and I had been immersed with the series called *Ozark* during this time, with the main plotline being how this couple from Chicago ends up in Missouri having to launder money for a drug cartel. Why would I mention this? Well, it seemed that the festival transparency button would often reveal a series of name changes for the particular festival - sometime several within a single year - or an inordinate number of countries associated with a festival taking place in, say, Chicago. There were festivals that were named for a particular US city, but managed in Poland.

Some of these festivals have up to *42 categories* of entry level - and encourage participants to submit to multiple categories, even offering discounts (but it still was more money). With 42 categories, at $35 per entry, with, say, 20 entries per category, that's almost $30,000. Four sessions a year? Almost $118,000. For one festival.

And the festivals without a screening presence also seemed to omit who the judges were.

But many of these same festivals had glowing reviews about how "great the communication was," "how wonderful the networking was," or how the festival was just about "the best festival" ever. If I clicked on the person, if I tried to track the film, I'd get a dead end.

Sometimes I clicked on the Instagram or FB link, and it took me back to the home web page. And those web pages all started looking *a lot like each other*.

So, having watched *Ozark,* and having done some basic math, if someone wanted to make a lot of money vanish, this was looking like a good way to do it. Also, if you wanted to make a good pile of money and not really have to do much for it, it was another opportunity to, as Pencho Kunchev said, play *"irresponsibly with the feelings and illusions of filmmakers."*

Event Eligibility Criteria of IMDB Events

For the Event to be considered for Listing on IMDb it should meet the following criteria.
Events must:

1. Not already exist. Please check the Events list before submitting a request.
2. Be specifically centered around movies, TV, or video games. For example, a lifestyle magazine may include a 'film of the year' category in its annual award ceremony, but the Event itself is not centered on movies and is therefore not eligible at this time.
3. Be current. Historical Events are not eligible at this time.
4. Be established for more than 5 years.
5. Have an official website.
6. Have a well-established jury or method of selecting winners. For example, anyone can start a website with voting mechanisms, and any would-be critic can select their favourite movies of the year and announce them on their own website or social media profile - these Events are not eligible.
7. Have received regular international or national press coverage (wide or trade). For example, a nationally broadcast awards ceremony or a festival award winner announced in recognized trade or other media publications would be eligible for listing. An Event with only local news, social media, fan or blog coverage is not eligible for listing at this time.

Wildcards:

If the Event does not meet the above criteria, we will consider Events if they have generated a considerable amount of public interest. For example, if a festival premiered a movie that went on to win an Oscar, that Event would be considered for listing (please note, the Event should have played an important part in the movie's release, like a premiere - just screening it does not make the Event eligible unless the other criteria are met).

Seule Töd performed rather well, which was nice, but I noticed another trend - *if* a film was recognized, and *if* there was an actual posting of the recognition, it came as *only* the film title - the filmmaker was not listed. I had hoped to start some of this promised and lauded networking with other festival animators, but alas.

Also, sometimes when the notification date came and went, I sent an email, and received a generic (and anonymous) response, but would then receive an award the next day.

If I wanted a certificate, they offered to provide a pdf of one for $35. If I wanted a trophy, they could coordinate one being shipped for $350.

FilmFreeway does have an opportunity to express your impression of the festival - but it is a listing of radio buttons. I had the opportunity to make a review on the festival site, *if* the film had been selected, and *if* the festival date had passed. I started having a little fun with that, because, well, I'm old and have faulty filters.

This is not to say all the experiences have been "interesting." In fact, some of them have been extremely rewarding - two of the festivals, "Scream It Off Screen" and "Oregon Scream Fest" have been not only interesting, but have very chatty coordinators, and I encourage anyone interested in something rather different to check them out ("Scream It Off Screen" was off-putting at first, but it's extremely honest in its process - you submit, you get a number, they draw 11 numbers at the start of an on-line show night, and they show them. You see them when they do. If it is a dreadful film, you vote in the comment field after 3 minutes, and if the majority says FOO! it's ceremoniously peeled from view, and they go to the next one. They do this live in a Minneapolis theatre, too, as a second venue, which sounds like a flashback to the old *Rocky Horror* days when things really went flying.) The Oregon festival takes place in an actual drive in.

There is a lot of fun to be had, but there's a lot of opportunity to *be* had.

So, since a neophyte to the process could easily be dazzled by initial impressions, a familiar name, or graphics employed by the websites, I offer the following observations as likely red flags:

1. The festival is in its first year - nope
2. The festival doesn't have a screening process - nope
3. The festival text has frequent errors, including the festival location, (ie, a festival from, say, Philadelphia, spells its name "Piladelphia" on its own website), - heck to the nope!
4. A festival sounds like it's taking place in a big city, but - A "Phoenix" festival isn't Arizona, it's a bird! An "Austin" festival is in the "US" - not Texas (aw, c'mon, a Texan not saying *TEXAS, TEXAS!??*) - nope
5. The festival has a name that sounds a lot like that of another, longer-established festival (an "Indie Festival" vs an "Independent Festival" using the same town, running at nearly the same time) - nope
6. The festival is sponsored by unusual companies, such as one selling "Men's and boy's trousers and slacks. Carbon paper and inked ribbons." - a creepy nope!
7. A long, long, almost comic list of submission categories. 42 options? - probably a no to that (they know 42 experts? Really?)

8. Offering a paper certificate, a trophy, or a "showing" or a "critique" report *for extra money* - skip that, too
9. No actual list of winners and the creators on any of its social media - pfooey
10. Way outdated social media - no updates since 2020? - not a good idea
11. A huge roster of countries involved (does it mean an international jury? Well...) - skip
12. Multiple name changes for the festival over a short period of time (ie , four wildly different names in two years) - naah

Finally, if the festival touts that it is "IMDb eligible," that offers some assurance, *but no guarantee*. Here is the caveat from the IMDb: *"We realize that there are already many Events listed on IMDb that do not meet this eligibility criteria. We apologize for the inconsistency - the...criteria are a -temporary measure until we schedule development work to improve the Event request/creation pipeline and storage/management of the associated Awards data."*

(See the boxed comment on the previous page for the IMDb criteria)

Digital Film Transfer Services Observations
(Probably Part One)
Southtree / Legacybox / Kodak Digitizing Box are all the same

The ads are doing the best to overwhelm their production lines after a holiday season making us all sentimental and dewy-eyed about those films and tapes in the basement or attic. The work for Southtree, for LegacyBox, and for Kodak are performed in the same facility located in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Yr Hmbl Typst Observations

Legacy box did a good job - a rather astonishing job in some cases. The regular 8mm films I provided didn't have an uncracked sprocket hole for their entire length and had been on reels, unwatched, for 20-30 years, in basements and attics. In addition, my hand-cranked Brumburger projector from the 1960s was as brutal as it was a "projector" in name only (we ran it like a peep show).

This was not a good plan in 1965 for long-term survival of 8mm footage

The other positive was that "a unit" with them was a *reel* - it can be a 50 foot reel, it can be a 400 foot reel. It's all the same to them. So I had a couple of 200 foot regular 8mm reels, and a 400 foot super 8mm reel. The same was with video - a 2 hour VHS tape or a 30 minute mini-VHS tape. All the same.

The interchangeable nature of Legacy Box and Southtree was confirmed on the arrival of the mp4 transfers - the return address for the Legacy Box service read *"Southtree."*

Caveats:
1. they are ***slow*** - you *can* pay for expedited service, but then you can't use their promotional discounts for the service (so you can pay twice as much *plus* the additional service fee)
2. Wait long enough and everything is 50% off - but then, still expect 8-10 weeks. I suspect this can be a longer wait if folks jumped on any holiday gift-card discounts.
3. They are ***pricey*** - even with the 50% discount, with basic shipping and insurance, you'll fork over $200 for a "10 unit package" - so cram whatever you can onto a 400 foot reel. I looked at the $200 price tag vs getting a digital transfer machine of my own that I'd frankly use, maybe, twice?
4. They do *not* convert sound film. Their frame rate *appears* to be 18fps. But for silent film, it's about the best I've experienced - it is probably a 2K resolution equivalent, and there is no artifact flicker. I'm going to experiment with a bit of sound footage and see if it can edit to 24fps in the Sony Vegas system with my next shipment to them.
5. I have not tried any 16mm footage - yet.
6. They sent my files back on a teeny weeny thumb drive. That was rather humbling. You can request that OR a DVD or a CLOUD ACCESS or a one-time download. Or all of them, at extra charges. I went with the mp4s on a thumb drive and then downloaded everything to a couple of hard drives ASAP. Everything edits fine on my Vegas system, so I'm sure Premiere will play nice as well.

This one worked like a tree chipper on film, too...

So - Soon, I will be using another service that promotes itself as the "anti-Legacy Box," *and* they can transfer sound film. Will advise on those results in a future note.

Nina Paley Goes Old Testament on The World

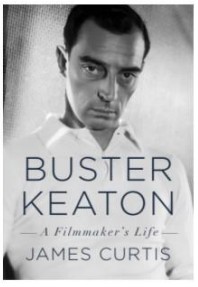
Nina Paley's animation style works well in transliterating the bronze-age era, sit-around-the-campfire, tales of terror from *Revelations*. From a sociological standpoint, these verses feel like brute punches to the gut with lots of wrath and vengeance. She shows "salvation" as an eternity for a superficial society inhabiting a consumer-directed, pretty-pretty heaven, that Twain said "consists mainly of undesirable persons." In doing so, Nina mesmerizes the observer with genuine Art, and in Moho, no less!

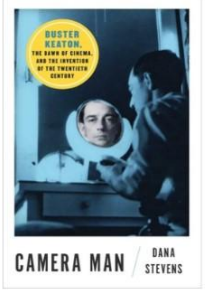
She has her entire project uploaded to archive.org and has given the world free reign to do with it what it will. "Have at it!"

https://blog.ninapaley.com/

Jim Schaub - Buster Keaton - Muskegon and Home

The final interviews for Buster Keaton's *Home* documentary have been wrapped up by Jim Schaub, and now *the fun starts*. The pandemic slowed things for the project, as it has for many others.





Two new biographies of Keaton are out this season (*Camera Man: Buster Keaton, the Dawn of Cinema, and the Invention of the Twentieth Century* by Dana Stevens, and *Buster Keaton : A Filmmaker's Life* by Curtis, James). Interest in "the great stone face" is growing.

49th Annie Awards Move To Virtual Format

On Saturday, March 12, 2022
http://ow.ly/8sTM50Hzewk

Hoo-Hah! Family Edition, Volume Five

http://hoo-hah.net

This is the fifth in the *Hoo-Hah* series, and yr hmbl typst would be hard pressed to single out a favorite edition. The current, "Family Fun" volume, again highlights the "Out Our Way" series, portions of which were still reprinted in the comics sections of my 1960s misspent youth. The creators show examples of their labor-intensive restoration process of these classic panels, and if that wasn't enough, have added obscure comics that celebrated the then "new" entertainment of motion picture, satire by Mark Twain, and frames of Jackie Coogan's silent feature, *Peck's Bad Boy*, from 1921 – the same year he was *The Kid* with Charlie Chaplin.

The panels could serve as the foundation for a feature film showing life of a century ago, but for now, we can build films in our mind of a land of laundry lines, kids being creative at not getting things done, and ample samples of "why mothers get gray."

The Cuphead Show - STREAMING WORLDWIDE on NETFLIX and as a COMIC!

Just when everything on TV looked like one more animated series based on selling merch, along comes a great-looking animated series based on selling merch! When *Cuphead* was introduced as a video game in 2017 by brothers Chad and Jared Moldenhauer, it was instantly a game that was as much (if not more) fun to watch as it was to play. It's great when brothers play well together. Now there are comics, plushies, and enough ephemera to make the Big D green. So why not a gorgeously Ub Iwerky-Fleischer studio style Netflix series called *The Cuphead Show!* It stared February 18 on Netflix. Well butter my popcorn!

The Bell Tolls

C'est triste d'oublier un ami.

Rita Dobias - Don Bajus - Giannalberto Bendazzi

An unexpected, chilled draft crosses the back of your neck in a securely sealed chamber; a dream appears where you cannot breathe; a nightmare pulls you toward a deep, smouldering hole – and you turn, you flinch, you wake, and wonder if... no, that cannot possibly be anything but imagination, but for a moment you think, *Is that all it would take?* And you wonder about others who sense that chill day after day, unable to fully communicate it to others, feeling it gradually diminish every little thing that defines yourself as *you*, until you don't even know yourself, no longer sense a thought, become engulfed by a condition you cannot control, nor can any longer understand.

So it must seem, to me at least, for those who have a chronic, progressive, debilitating disorder. To most of us, a chronic illness is just a shorthand device - Gary Cooper with Lou Gehrig's Disease; a supplement to deter Alzheimer's; a drug commercial promising to slow the side effects of multiple sclerosis. But these diseases do take away life, slowly, perniciously, unconcerned whether the life shares a spouse, children, friends, dreams... until that life's own memory forgets to live. And sometimes it seems that nobody else can remember – who was that person, was there more joy when she laughed, sang, lived?

The internet is such a snoopy beast - it pretends to know everything, but it has fissures and blanks and feigns a digital TIA when you would like to have your memory jogged, or jolted. And when it draws a blank, and there is nothing to fill it, was the search itself just another mystery, had its mission ever been based on a tangible burden of existence?

The beast tells us that *Rita Ann Dobias,* or *Dubias,* or *Dobias-Waters,* or *Rita*, was born July 29, 1961. She died from a chronic, debilitating condition on December 21, 2021. She was sixty. She may have been related to, or known by several people who shared bits of her last name, or were her neighbors at several addresses scattered across the state of Michigan.

So much for the snoopy beast within the internet. It says nothing of an appreciation for members of the First Nations, concern for missing children, hoping those with disabilities are remembered, or her love of children.

If you are of a certain age within ASIFA Central, you would have remembered Rita at the turn of the last century, winning recognition with the Helen Victoria Haynes World Peace Competition. If you were typing these lines, you would have remembered her soft smile, a tilt to the head, her hair across her shoulders as she managed at first with a cane, then a walker, and finally, a wheelchair; a quiet, delicate, peaceful soul who created for as long as she could. Then she couldn't come to distant retreats, or gatherings in Grand Rapids, and gradually became a quiet, delicate, peaceful recollection as other perceived priorities crowded her out of sight.

So when *I* feel that unexpected, chilled draft across the back of my neck, I shudder, look around, and think – yeah, I deserved that.

There will be other notes of passing in the following pages, people now gone who have voices to champion their presence on this earth, but for Ms. Dobias, I can offer only the observation that this is a chillier world, and provide a few photos shared by some ASIFA members and her FB page. The pandemic has doubtless obstructed movements on other announcements, other tributes, other memorials. If they emerge, please share.

Until then, ask not for whom the bell tolls.

Toute le monde n'a pas eu un ami

Don Bajus

from a release by estate curator Linda Koutsky

Animator, business owner, painter, jazz music devotee, dancer, jokester, and lover of life, passed away at age 88 on October 29, 2021.

Don was born on March 25, 1933, and grew up in Canada. A gifted young cartoonist, Don wanted to become an animator like Walt Disney, so he moved to Minnesota to study at Minneapolis College of Art and Design. His first effort was inspired by Disney's dancing broomstick!

In 1958 Studio One recruited Don to establish the first commercial animation production studio in the Midwest. Twelve years later, he and partner Mike Jones launched Bajus-Jones Film Corporation, also a 2D animation studio. An early Bajus-Jones promotional piece claimed that, "Animation can do anything, except save a bad idea." His firm was recognized with numerous awards, including a 1985 Clio (for excellence in advertising) featuring a giant runny nose seeking a Kleenex.

Don was always hungry for new technology. In 1993, he became a founder, partner, and creative

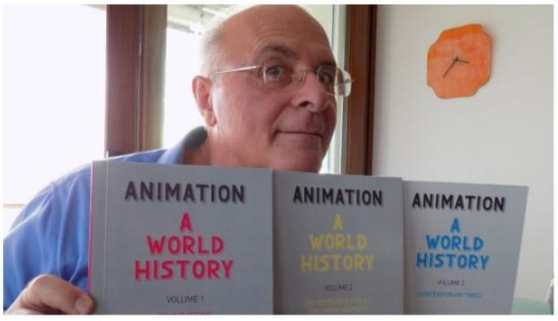
5. "Great Moments Revisited – Time Travel, Florence, 1505 – Leonardo Da Vinci, La Gioconda & Me" Copyright ©Don Bajus 2021

director in the launch of Windlight Studios, pioneering computer-assisted motion-capture animation. Movements by live actors (including Don) were transferred onto computer generated characters.

At his core, Don was a storyteller across multiple media. He was known for an ongoing series of highly detailed time-travel paintings that showed him working alongside Vincent Van Gogh, Salvador Dali, and Frida Kahlo, as they painted their signature artworks.

Don is well remembered as a kind and generous man with an irresistible smile, a perpetrator of gags and practical jokes, and an inventive thinker who enlivened every discussion with his wit, humor, and unrivaled intellect. He was an avid reader of everything from sci fi to scientific discoveries, a home repair enthusiast, a tree sculptor, a maker of hilarious greeting cards for his friends and family, and a mentor to those in need. He was proud to be a dual Canadian-US citizen; his hands were never without a pencil.

He is survived by his life-long dancing partner and wife of 63 yrs, Beverly, feline pal Salsa, loving nieces and nephews, members of the Minikahda Club, Never Too Old Artists, the Fancy Foot Dance Club, and many, many friends.



Giannalberto Bendazzi - A Studious Life

adapted from *Animation Magazine* (January 2022)

On December 13, 2021, the animation community lost a dear friend and true champion with the passing of teacher, historian, and journalist Giannalberto Bendazi at age 75.

Bendazzi was born on July 17, 1946. At 21, he became the youngest *Italian Daily* film critic, yet soon began to write essays on animation and live-action cinema. He devoted his full attention to the study of animation in the 1980s and lectured on several continents, receiving the 2002 Award for Outstanding Achievement in Animation Theory from *Animafest Zagreb*. In 2016, ASIFA granted him the Life Achievement Award, and in 2019 he received an Honorary Doctorate from Universidade Lusófona in Portugal.

Among the over 30 books and articles Bendazzi authored were *Cartoons: 100 Years of Cinema Animation*, the three-tome *Animation: A World History*, and *Alexeieff: Itinerary of a Master* He was also a beloved and frequent participant at animation festivals around the world.

In one of his last interviews, he said, "Before my book *Cartoons*, there was no global history of

animation, even though a lot was known about American animation. (The 1994 English edition was improved and published in 2015 as *Animation: A World History* [CRC Press, 3 vols.]). For culture in general, and for journalists specialized in visual arts and film, this filled a giant gap. However, very few people were aware of this gap because they were blinded by Disney's presence. I reached this goal through years and years of work and research."

His life and work is summarized with his statement that, "Animation is in every area of knowledge... Hollywood films using digital technologies are presented as live-action features, but for the most part, they are animated!"

https://www.giannalbertobendazzi.com

Society for Animation Studies Updates: 2022 Conference and Support for the People of Ukraine

Dear SAS friends - from Kath –
"We're really excited here at Teesside University to meet you all and enjoy the buzz of a conference on campus. But don't forget there is, of course, the option to present remotely should you need to due to possible travel restrictions and the ongoing pandemic." That means it can be attended without the travel. Heck to the yeah. *Visit the website for more info - https://www.tees.ac.uk/minisites/sas/index.cfm*

The following announcement from SAS also reflects concerns with the Russian attack on the Ukraine:

Sun, 27 Feb 2022, Olga Bobrowska

animationstudies@animationstudies.org

Dear SAS members,
I ask you to consider signing and sharing via your private profiles or professional social media channels (the ones you think are most appropriate) an open letter against the war in Ukraine set to express the standpoints of the international animation community: *www.ipetitions.com/petition/animators-against-the-invasion-of-ukraine*

I realize this is a symbolic gesture only but by all accounts that are coming to me from the friends in Ukraine (and basically which are coming to anyone who stays in touch with the friends in Ukraine), symbolic gestures still matter.

"I also want to point your attention to the open letter written and signed by over 600 Russian animators. Available in translation here: https://asifa.net/animators-from-russia-call-for-peace-in-ukraine

- and OIAF and Facebook.

"If you want to find out how to support the Ukrainian fighters, where to find verified, reliable news, and what are reliable charities you can donate in order to support refugees from Ukraine, please always check first with the official Ukrainian websites and profiles, ask your friends in Ukraine, of course I can also help (I'm trying to keep my personal fb profile updated in this regard). Remember to rely only on verified news."

Best regards,
Olga Bobrowska

From ASIFA SF newsletter

(Note - this is a discussion on the pay disparities for animators at studios where record profits are being made. More on this subject in the next newsletter– this thing has to get out before April!!!! - yr hmbl typst)
https://therealnews.com/its-time-for-hollywood-animators-to-get-the-pay-and-respect-they-deserve

Deanna's Timely Odessa Film

The dreadful news from Ukraine made the earlier mentioned festival film *Come Outside Masha* all the more poignant - Deanna Morse, fearless world traveler, also made a visit to Odessa a few years back and created this short film, comparing her steps in Odessa with those in the groundbreaking 1925 film, *Battleship Potemkin*. Can Russia's dictators ever be anything but brutal?

Video: https://vimeo.com/66033567

Public Domain Day for 2022

January was Public Domain Month (ok, the first of January was Public Domain Day, but we can stretch the joy). With the US Copyright being made somewhat consistent now, all film and print material is covered by copyright for 95 years, but all performances (ie recordings) are covered for *100 years*. This means films and books from 1926 and before are up for grabs, and those 78s and cylinders from 1922 and before are fodder for fun! This means yr hmbl typst has to rebuild his little flowchart from last November!
However, just think - you can make your own BAMBI!

Here are the details from the kids at Duke Law:

https://web.law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2022

AND IT GETS EVEN BETTER!
The Library of Congress has a "Citizen DJ" scratch mix program for HIP HOP rhythms, using PD material as an onsite program with downloadable sound files!
https://citizen-dj.labs.loc.gov/
Yeah - you'll be there for a while!

Hip Hop Mixing with 15 categories and thousands of mixes pre-cut and compatible with Audacity and other software (we'll say it twice!): https://citizen-dj.labs.loc.gov/

You want some VIDEO? Well...we know a guy...
For Audio Recordings – the Music Modernization Act (MMA) An hour with the archives and other celebrants...
https://archive.org/details/a-celebration-of-sound-public-domain-day-2022

Notices of Non-Commercial Use (NNU) through the Copyright office – pertains to pre-1972 recordings (which would have been 2067 otherwise). They have a search engine that lets you see if a recording has been "exploited" (meaning, claimed as owned by someone else already making use of its copyright) - if you find nothing there, follow their instructions, pay a $50 filing fee, and if in 90 days, nobody says WHOA, it's yours without fear of statutory damages.

It was a process designed mainly for archivists and libraries, with lots of work by Duke university's law students for the past five years.

https://www.copyright.gov/music-modernization/pre1972-soundrecordings/search-soundrecordings.html

LAST MINUTE ADDITIONS OF IMPORTANT STUFF AND THINGS:

The Detroit International Festival of Animation - 2022 is now accepting invitations (7th year, so have at it! Safe!)

$7 entry fee, categories based on length, entry fees identical

Detroit International Festival of Animation 2022
May 7 @ 9:00 am - May 8 @ 5:00 pm EDT
http://www.difestofanim.com/

AND

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot!
Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account:

https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

*Yr hmbl typst now collapses in **A HEAP!***

*ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) February (Nearly March) 2022 - see the updated website with more announcements **and an ever expanding newsletter archive** for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org
And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION
As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com
Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day.

ASIFA Central

"Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote," Edition, 2022

The ASIFA Central Board

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Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

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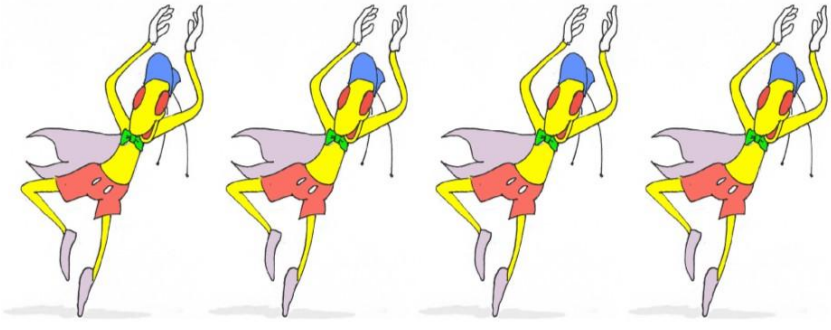
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Bob Swieringa

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest - US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators ***in the world****. This chapter was established in 1975. As volunteers, our board members take on many responsibilities - social media coordinators, retreat co-organizers, web updaters, ani-jam facilitators, party planners, inveterate and unrepentant doodlers, and* ***more****. Our Board Members serve the front line for our Midwest animation chapter and are in frequent contact with the International ASIFA board.*

Julie Goldstein and the Grand Rapids Ballet Company

Julie Goldstein during rehearsals, with tech setups, her students, and choreographer Emily Reed to "generate an immersive imaginary landscape for the *Jumpstart* performance"



"No Longer Left Outside" - a Collaboration Between Ballet and Drawing Boards

For its celebration of 50 years of furniture city terpsichorical activity, the Grand Rapids Ballet performed "Jumpstart 2022," a celebration of artistic collaboration and educational organizations in Western Michigan this past March.

Among its eight projects, one represented a partnership with the GVSU Department of Visual and Media Arts, ***under the guidance of ASIFA Central President and assistant professor Julie Goldstein***. Her second-level animation class worked with Emily Reed to generate "an immersive, imaginary landscape for the Jumpstart performance."

Emily Reed of the Grand Rapids Ballet arranged the choreography, and 18 students from GVSU worked throughout their winter semester on animation and movement exercises for "No Longer Left Outside," revolving around two pieces of music with excerpts from "A Conversation with Myself" by Alan Watts. Propelled by Watts' words, Goldstein's students developed a projected background of nature, moss, and birds coordinated to the colors worn by the on-stage performers.

"This is something where students can have a high-impact learning experience," explained president Goldstein, by conveying the emotion of the dancers in "a symbiotic relationship as a seamless effect."

The process included animations created in class, analyzing the projection requirements beforehand, and then finalizing the layout during multiple rehearsals.

Grace Spellman, a film and video major, said she was inspired by birds "flapping their wings, almost like they're dancing, too." Her concentration was on hummingbirds, cardinals and seagulls. "I love to draw and paint, and doing this solidified that for me," Spellman said.

Hannah Barton, a graphic design major, was inspired by the grace within the dance, creating animated lines to flow in the background. "With animation, one wrong movement can throw it off."

Discussions are under way for another collaboration, this one involving the Grand Rapids Opera company. Chuck Jones is smiling upon them all.

(Background for this article came from various reports in the Grand Rapids Press and the GVSU Lanthorn, whose contributors include Ayron Rutan, destined for greatness in the multimediaverse)

Notes on "A Conversation with Myself" by Alan Watts

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aufuwMiKmE

There is a difference in style between the things human beings do, and what mother nature does.

Nature wiggles - but people want to get things "ironed out" or "straightened out" - that doesn't fit nature. The human being has a simple kind of mind. We live in boxes. A triangle is simpler, cruder, than a mountain.

Human beings are just as wiggly as nature, and our brains are an incredible mess of wiggles. And that's the part of ourselves that we understand least of all. I blame Euclid.

I am one of the cells in this incredible brain that I cannot understand.

Everything in nature is dependent on everything else.

BREAKING NEWS FROM THE OIAF!

+ "O, Canada!" *+*

The Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF) has extended an invitation to members of ASIFA-Central to screenings, exhibits, workshops and PUMPKIN CARVING this fall. The event is **returning to live in-person screenings and talks** happening from September 21 to 25.

ASIFA-Central members are eligible for a $20 association discount off the price of a full festival pass (Animapass or TAC Pass). The box office goes online mid-June, 2022. Please note that in order to participate, members will need to upload proof of membership when they purchase their pass. For more information, please visit www.animationfestival.ca

Submissions are now being accepted for the September competition. And they have a POSTER already! Those precocious Canadians!

AAFF - Yr Hmbl Typst Notes on Its 60th Anniversary

Last year's Ann Arbor Film Festival seemed to have an undercurrent of rediscovery of actual film - either participants were shooting on 16mm again or were creating the sensation of a film-based production by special effects (graininess and reel-change reminders were a feature of the b/w release of *Mank* and have surfaced in Netflix's even more retro *Cuphead Show,* so find those splicing tapes and rewinds, kiddies!); this year there is a sense of discovery of *archive.org* and all that the free-use, generally public domain monster server can offer for both the eyes and ears. It is nice to see material repurposed and serve as a likely source of self-directed education. (A confession from yr hmbl typst - with all the bombast and effects of the pandemic film releases, I found the greatest comfort in the works of Georges Melies and what he accomplished with his self-built camera by 1900.) Nevertheless, Ann Arbor's films are nothing if not innovative or at least a prod to the frontal lobes - the non-animated *Ten Questions for Henry Ford* was an astonishing example of cooperation between the filmmaker and the Ford company, and while the actor portraying Ford was hardly a visual equivalent, he brought his re-enactment to a grand level of sophistication. An early entry in the competition, *Salidas,* could be an interstitial in a dramatic film showing "associated fusions between farewells and eternity," with the conduit being an old East German ship canal lift.

Moving to animation, some of the many notable examples this year included the stop motion *Money Is the One True God,* the rotoscoping of *Archipelago* and *Insomnia,* and the use of a static-laden scratchy soundtrack among several of the entries. The surreal kitchen of *The 4th Wall* as a washing machine earned its place among the award recipients.

Of the several juror presentations, Gina Kamentsky (ginakamentsky.com) with her drawn-on-film techniques incorporating sculpting techniques in her kinetic, hand-cranked art pieces, and ASIFA's own Thomas Renolder, who shared his earliest filmed experiments (proving a good hairstyle can last a lifetime), were especially welcome visitors to the home computer screen. *The Sally Dixon Story* was a 50 minute tribute to the late experimental film curator who founded the film department at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh and was an early champion of "film as art."

The AAFF - "Bending Minds Since 1963."

GLAS festival - 2022

With many festivals reverting to on-site only this year (notably *Annecy*), the opportunity to view films without extended travel remains a welcome option whenever possible. GLAS again extended this option for 2022. *Ten Degrees of Strange* appeared here (as well as at AAFF) and *Paradis: Goodbye Jerome!* brought a *Yellow Submarine* vibe to the entries, with a haunting image of a heavenly-derived actual hot *dog* offering itself up as lunch in its final

7TH EDITION ONLINE APRIL 6-10 2022

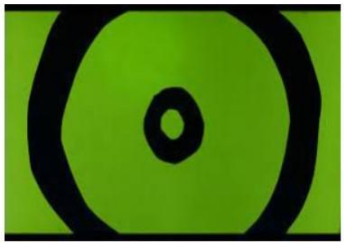
scene. "Where have all the flowers gone" wafted through the final portions of *Impossible Figures and Other Stories,* a favorite of last-year's ITFS festival, as was *O,* a 360 degree repeatedstop-motion spin in a derelict apartment, which was a residency project of Paul Wenninger. *Wellspring and the Tower* had some very satisfying closing credits, Tal Kantor's *Letters to a Pig* was a hyper-realistic fable of "inherited collective trauma" where a boy is saved by swine. An overly affectionately bear has unexpected menu additions for his sad birthday in *Bear Hug,* a boy becomes a Nascar wheel to please his father in *Sierra* from Estonia, and the Chilean pair of Cristobal León and Joaquin Cociña were given a retrospective of their stop-motion, full-room, whispered nightmares.

The extraordinarily well-appointed Tom C. T. Brown hosted the competition showings and the follow up Q and A's.

October Animation Celebration - In EDMORE?!

Edmore, Michigan, recently more known for putting "the pot in potato" is also the final resting place for members of Winsor McCay's family, who lived and worked in the Stanton-Edmore area after McCay departed for brief college training in Ypsilanti – and fame in fantasy and film. This year, as part of International Animation Day, Edmore will be celebrating with a Sunday afternoon of historic and international animation on October 23. There will be cartoons! Door prizes! And, quite likely, *potatoes!* Details to follow! *Edmore, I tell ya, EDMORE!*

Gary Schwartz and Ukraine Animation



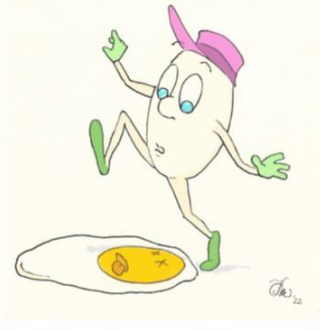
The ubiquitous Mr. Schwartz turned a recent animation workshop toward the turmoil in the Ukraine, and this effective commentary was the result. It is thrilling to know that some international members are able to offer escape routes for Russian animators while lending similar options and support to the heroic citizens of the Ukraine. Animation unites us! Despots, with their singular lack of joy or imagination, will only be worthy of the dustbins of history.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1w53TyugPQ

And, Well, This is Apparently a Thing - Animated Ad for the Venus Shaving System

The cable alternative Roku brings the added bonus of atypical advertising, and this Gillette-Venus one- minute animated commercial popped up while yr hmbl typst was waiting for the morning news summary from Grand Rapids the other day. I had to double check to be sure it wasn't a satire on consumerism, but it's real, and rather clever.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIlUNuSdJdA



ASIFA Central Coffee Breaks

There are few subjects not broached during the monthly gatherings hosted by Michael Long of Saint Louis (you have to spell out the *ST.* now, because the improved USPS no longer understands abbreviations - gee, makes one wonder what the abbreviation *USPS* is supposed to mean - but yr hmbl typst digresses). Members tilt at the technological windmills, fighting the assistance of Win10 or OS11, Zoom access, and who was hacked by that bastion of security, *Facebook,* to but their best faces forward, even if it belongs to a cat. The challenges of teaching during a pandemic, trying to engage against the monumental boredom experienced by the students during lockdown, and *then* get them back on an educational timeline once things begin to reopen have been major discussions. Some students have been able to join in, showing their experiments with licorice and candy corn teeth. The gatherings fall around mealtime in some zones, so that certainly grabbed attention.

And did you know that Zoom lets you sport a moustache? Of course you did. Yeah, we all played with that. In fact, we discussed the varieties of moustaches during the pandemic midpoint, since shaving had become a hypothetical for quite a while.

Dana Sink of Pennsylvania (film *Power*) joined the April meeting, and that led to a discussion on ducks. Deanna Morse neighbors with chickens, and Dana has ducks. Dana sings, *Time to milk the ducks!* to his water fowl. Bob Swieringa suggested he *Release the Quackens*

Influential films drove a nostalgic discussion of early experiences with *This is Cinerama, How the West Was Won,* a projector film meltdown during an Orc battle in *Lord of the Rings,* the lifelong terror from the banshee of *Darby O'Gill*, and Abel Gance's restored 1927 4 hour epic *Napoleon* with Carmine Coppola conducting in the early 1980s.

Deanna Morse was proud of her new wall art, including *Canine Gothic,* Tracy Miller-Robbins' workhorse scanner remains in need of an upgrade, Michael Long is working on mosaics and gorillas, and David Baker is looking forward to setting up microTV stations after his upcoming retirement. And visitor Sean Dunn wants magazines! We'll see what USPS *really* means after this deluge of material!

The latest meeting ended with the Baker corollary to a rule at FSU: *The project is never finished - it is abandoned.*

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) April, 2022, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - *https://asifa.net* *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at *jim.middletonrx@gmail.com* *or, for dull bloggery,* *https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com*

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day.

So much more to come - *Ecstatic Truth* from the Czech republic, FI:IF and more online festival fun, ASIFA East festivities...ASIFA International news...and upcoming elections, and perhaps an actual recipe for zucchini bread.

Until then, be safe, as comfortable as possible, and watch a cartoon. Several cartoons.

ASIFA Central

JUNE 2022 Edition

The ASIFA Central Board

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer
Briana Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassadors:
Christine Veras
&
Tracy Miller-Robbins

Secretary and Yr Hmbl Typst
Jim Middleton

Membership Coordinator
Charles Wilson

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest - US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators ***in the world****. This chapter was established in 1975. The board members volunteer have many responsibilities - social media coordinators, retreat co-organizers, web updaters, ani-jam facilitators, party planners, inveterate and unrepentant doodlers, and* ***more****. They also work at the front line for this Midwest animation chapter and are in frequent (now practically simultaneous) contact with the International ASIFA board.*

DEANNA MORSE - NEW ASIFA INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

A new executive board has been elected for the next three years for ASIFA International. The founders envisioned a world of peace and dialogue to settle our differences, with the art of animation creating a bridge among different cultures and ideologies.

The new executive board is broadly international:
Deanna Morse, President (USA)
Anastasia Dimitra, Vice President (Hellas/Greece)
Mohamed Ghazala, Vice President (Egypt)
Johnchill Lee, Vice President (China)
Annegret Richter, Vice President (Germany)
Stefan Stratil, Treasurer (Austria)
Thomas Renoldner, Secretary General (Austria)

Deanna Morse - Portrait by K. Lynn Smith

Deanna Morse is an independent experimental animation artist, with films for Sesame Street, and pieces in permanent collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and an emerita faculty member, Grand Valley State University. A former ASIFA International Vice President, she currently lives in Southern Oregon and is equally active in the ASIFA Central chapter.

Anastasia Dimitra is an animation professor and director, with many awards and international screenings. She has written books and papers concerning the art of animation, and has been a jury member on several international animation festivals. She is very active in ASIFA Hellas, and has served ASIFA International as the Coordinator of the 60 th Anniversary Celebration and treasurer.

Mohamed Ghazala, with Ph.D in animation, is currently the chair of Cinematic Arts school in Effat University, KSA. He is also award-winning animation director. His main research interest is in documenting the animated practices in Africa. He served ASIFA International as a Vice President.

Johnchill Lee with a PhD. in Digital Media Communications, has a diverse background in animation, education, new technologies, and the industry of animation. He is President of Beijjng Digital Creativity Industry Association, the Secretary General of ASIFA China, and a former Vice President of ASIFA.

Annegret Richter, with a Ph.D in animated documentary, has a solid background in Communication and Media Studies. She was a festival director at the International Short Film Festival in Dresden, and International Leipzig Festival of Documentary and Animated Films. She has worked as a director in the Communication department for ASIFA.

ASIFA CENTRAL ONLINE RETREAT COMETH
"Re-FRAME by FRAME"
JULY 15 AND 16

The schedule for the upcoming retreat has been outlined (and may be subject to change between now and July 15) - so RSVP to secure your ZOOM seat to the ride of a weekend!

RSVP to asifacentralretreat@gmail.com

Friday, July 15th, 2022 - Keynote Presentation featuring Lisa Barcy at 7pm

Q&A afterwards to approximately 9pm with an After Party in THE INTERACTIVE ROOM (you may dance, if you wish)

Saturday, July 16th, 2022
Before 10AM - Wake up! Wake up! Feed the cat! Let out the dog! Shake off the bedhead! Eat that toast! Chew each mouthful! Brew that coffee!!!!

10AM – Introductions/Chat

11AM – 12PM – 5 Minute Lightning Talks – descriptions will be ever-evolving, and if you want to play, add your name with the RSVP request! Topics thus far will include:
IAD Student Presentation – Interlochen Animation Program Development – ASIFA Central and International News – the phenomenal bibliography project of ANIMATION

1PM – 2PM – Hands on Workshop – they mysteries of Looom – (requires some pre-preparation on the part of the participants, as in go out to LOOOM and get the software - it may be a challenge to non iPad users, but work-arounds are being explored even as these words are typey typed typed out)

2PM – 3PM – Animator Talk – 15 Minutes – to include so far:
Gary Schwartz on the making of The Crown Nobody Wanted https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNhy897qAMU ,
Updates from Chris Sullivan – Michael Long – Jim Middleton (time slots available! boast and brag!)

3PM – 5PM – Hands on Workshop
CUT OUT ANIMATION / STOP MOTION PRO – STOP MOTION STUDIO
Unexpected Juxtaposition – Exquisite Corpse – Poetry Jam (results to be shown from 6-9pm)

5PM – 6PM Dinner Break
6pm-9pm Share your work, discoveries, or projects for 10 minutes – description TBD (time slots available!)

MORSE'S 1989 FILM "PLANTS" MAKES A COMEBACK

Deanna Morse reports an interesting increase in interest in her early 3D animation project, "Plants" from 1989. https://vimeo.com/75121003

This seems to be on the heels of the interest in a "retro" computer style of several festival films when 1985's *Money for Nothing* computer graphics was "State of the Art." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTP2RUD_cL0 (although Mick Jagger's "Hard Woman" pushed the limits of early hard drives the same year: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8btm2els8kM)

(An example of the current retro look can be seen in the bittersweet story of "Marona's Fantastic Tale" from 2019.)

It also may be due to individual animators wanting to explore using the CGI style without having to involve hundreds of trained specialists to build a homogenized virtual reality. Imagined reality can often be best expressed by a committee of one.

Upcoming OIAF-2022 Will Again Include ASIFA Discounts!!!

Well. the release from lockdown has had its effect in Canada!

The Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF) is one of the world's leading animation events providing showings, exhibits, workshops and entertainment since 1976. Attracting artists, producers, students and animation fans from around the globe, the OIAF brings together art and industry to experience world-class animated works.

This year's *in person only* OIAF runs from September 21 to September 25. Amy Kravitz, the inspiring teacher from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and creator of animated visual poetry, will serve as this years's honorary president.

And - ***AND*** - ASIFA members get a discount on festival passes! So go, already! Get a room with some laundry facilities and save even more time packing! It's all about the savings! ASIFA Central will be sending a verified list of eligible members to Ottawa for the discounts - and maybe some recipes for *BBQ hotwing poutine...*

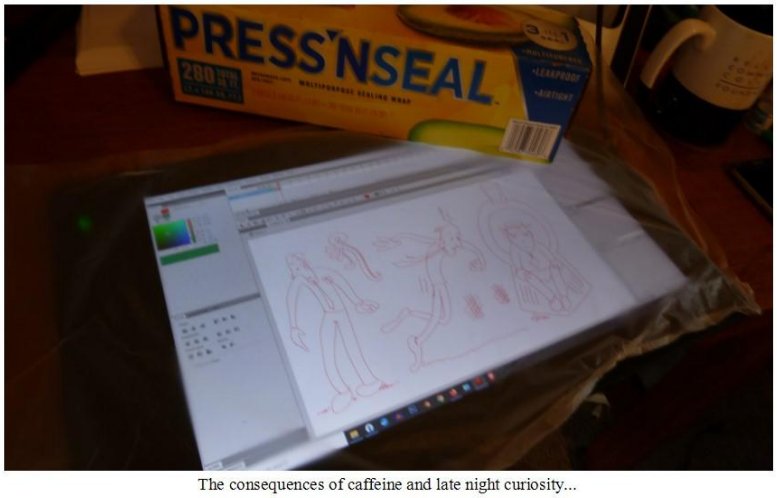
https://www.animationfestival.ca/

End of QuickTime Software Support and Functionality

First went Netscape, then Internet Explorer did a dumpster dive, but beneath the radar, support for the long-popular Quicktime player also ended this year. This means if you have a copy of Quicktime Pro and want to install it on a different computer, the registration key will no longer be recognized, nor will it play *.mov files. In addition, if you have been using the Quicktime platform to convert films from or to different formats, notably the old *.fla files from the proto-Flash days, you will lose that level of access to your early animation files. Registered, functioning copies of Quicktime on existing computers still work at this point, so if you have a laptop or desktop with a functional Quicktime on it, this is the time to get your old files converted to jpgs or other formats that can still be read by video editors. Your humbl typst is racing to get several dozen short experiments from the late 1990s into an archival format for future use.

Making Your Smooooth Tablet Behave Like Paper - a Home Hack Experiment

The best thing about a digital tablet is getting your vision into a digital form while still having the sense of drawing. However, the effect is muted when the drawing surface is a frictionless and smooth. Some manufacturers have made a "paper feel" screen that gives the stylus some resistance while skimming the surface, and iPads have an applique that can fit atop the screen - but these all come at a cost, and what about those with "fixed incomes" and only online resources? Well, here's a home experiment conducted by yr hmbl typst recently making use of a Huion Pro-16 digital tablet and some Press n Seal cling wrap. The wrap has a slight texture and sticks to the screen without too much distortion of the tablet image. The act of drawing now has a slight bit of resistance, and the chronic problem of a little "hook" appearing whenever lifting the stylus seems to be remedied. It works for a couple of drawing sessions before it should be replaced, but it achieves the desired effect for pennies vs dollars. Yr hmbl typst is still checking whether any residue left behind affects subsequent use of the tablet, but thus far, it's doing pretty well. The example in the photograph is while using - gasp - Flash CS5 from the pre-Cambrian period, and the plastic wasn't cut to size, which is what will happen in subsequent experiments. No doubt it violates some "proper use" warranty for the tablet, but that's the risk one takes in the name of SCIENCE! Ok, in the name of CHEAPSKATE!



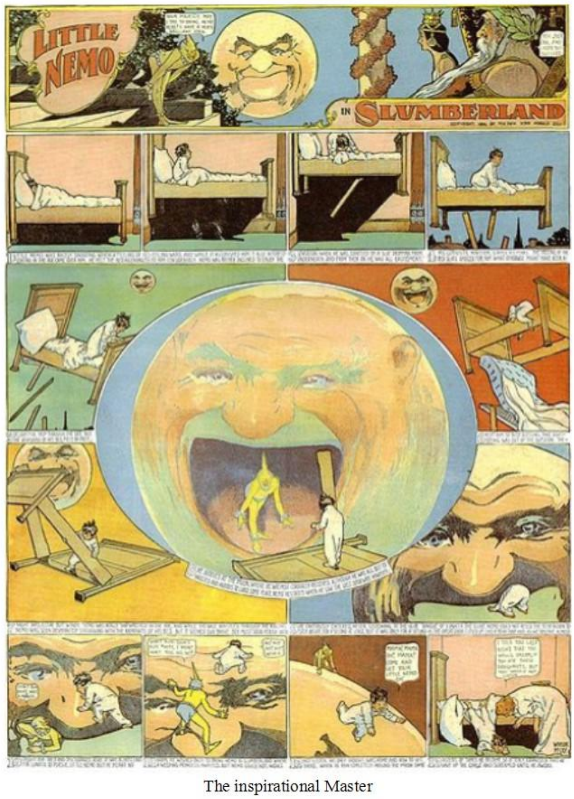
The consequences of caffeine and late night curiosity...

Little Nemo Reappearing in Games and Graphics

Y r hmbl typst, keeping his Edmorian roots saturated in the soil where once trod the parents, sister, and uncle of Winsor McCay, just can't get enough of every new project that emerges, or any online reference that can be derived from, the genius of that human who could fill pages for the Hearst papers – and make even the vapid prattle of Arthur Brisbane ***look*** interesting.

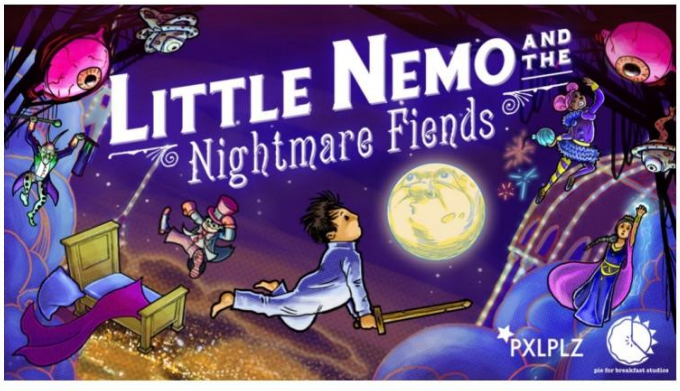
http://www.panelpatter.com/2015/08/perchance-to-dream-in-little-nemos-big.html - will bring you to "Little Nemo's Big New Dreams," and "Return to Slumberland" reviews, that somehow slipped past my eyes seven years ago (drat those staff meetings - DRAT!), and a certain editorial cartoon of WWI vintage seems just as sobering as today's headlines. So this brief newsletter will provide a few visuals celebrating the one, the only -

WINSOR McCAY



The inspirational Master

The Little Nemo computer game, featuring a familiar moon.



Little Nemo gets a manga treatment....

... and sadly, a McCay image that one could only wish were a transitory nightmare...

Catch up with everyone at and after
THE RETREAT!
July 15 and 16

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) June, 2022, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account:
https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at
https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

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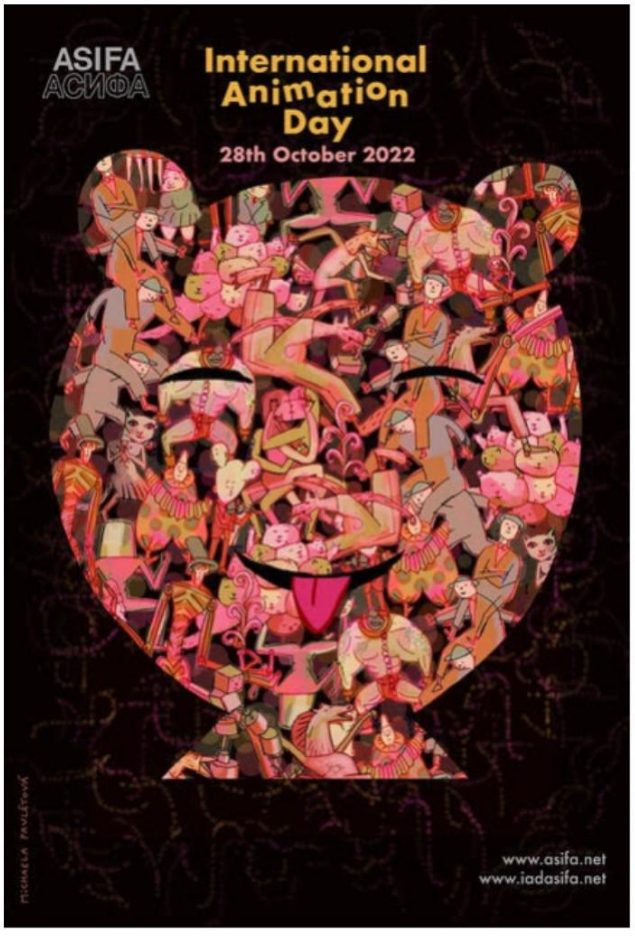
Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!

The Month That Just Keeps On Giving!

Yet another ASIFA Central Newsletter 2022
for IAD Information!

The Retreat in July was so jam-packed with info and reportage that it will take a second installation to squeeze through the ASIFA Central bandwidth (coming soon!). In addition, the International Animation Day Celebration is approaching, and that means - *more film freeway instructions!*
And that's what we have in this notice!!!



Michaela Pavlátová

Introducing this years 2022 International Animation Day Poster!

Poster creator interview/press release: Michaela Pavlátová - press release by Bob Swieringa

A joyful menagerie from Michaela Pavlátová
The International Animation Day poster was designed this year by Michaela Pavlátová, animator and film director from the Czech Republic. The poster is vibrant, colorful, and playful – an image of life, of motion.

"The inspiration for the poster was joy, a celebration of animation," wrote Michaela. The variety of characters and motions are contained in the outline of a head, itself expressive and playful. "I like to draw people and animals… but there could also be other characters, other animals… But at the moment I drew the ones that are there – interesting, fun, crazy, diverse" she explained. This extended to how she also thought of the head, full of these characters and ideas: "And because I

wanted the head to be sympathetic, playful and also a little bit provocative, I gave it a small protruding tongue."

Michaela notes that her path to animation was quite straight, attending the Academy of Arts and Crafts (UMPRUM) in Prague after completing art high school. Originally, she wished to study illustration, but given the competition for openings, she thought of animation, entering the animation department "and very soon I fell in love with animation itself."

Undertaking animation can be demanding work, but she found that she had a right combination of "a certain amount of talent, discipline, strong will, enthusiasm, humility, diligence, patience," that have continued to aid her in her career. After graduation she made a few animation shorts in the state studio Kratky Film Prague, a place rich in animation history.

After a period of time working in San Francisco, she returned to the Czech Republic, directing live action films and creating animated shorts and an animated feature film (*My Sunny Maad*, 2021), and would like to make another. "An important part of my life is also teaching," Michaela said; she is currently head of the department of animation at FAMU Prague.

Michaela notes that working in animation is a unique undertaking. "Who else would want to spend life in isolation in our dark studios… working for ages on films… And still, we love it, we are obsessed with our work. Frame by frame we create new life, new stories which can be real, funny, sad, obscure, touching, alarming, poetic, you name it."

Looking at animation broadly, she sees animation as "a distinct, unique art form with a long tradition that currently takes many forms… Animation is constantly getting a new face, new platforms and new possibilities" as it appears in expanding areas, such as games and virtual reality, as part of the mainstream and the indie art scene.

She sees the current state of animation in this range of approaches – both in form and content. "I hope that animation will continue to be so colorful, diverse and inspiring," she says. And that creativity deserves recognition, embodies in her IAD poster: "The diverse yet strong community of crazy people creating new universes deserves to be celebrated!"

IAD - How You May Participate

(this may seem somewhat familiar)

Deadline for Submissions: September 1, 2022

The IAD program is coordinated through the online festival broker, Film Freeway. It's free, but it is a multi-step process. If your intended film is already in Film Freeway, skip to Part Three below.

Note #1 - more information on the streaming version of IAD films will be coming soon!

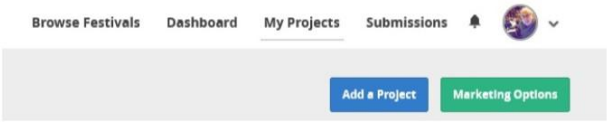
Note #2 - and this is important to understand - *this is not a festival.* ASIFA is using FilmFreeway as a holding zone for films that chapter members want to make available for showing as part of the IAD celebration. *No prizes are awarded, and no laurels are "official" for ASIFA IAD.* Chapter representatives will pick among the submissions, and on IAD, will run them as part of that area's contribution to the international celebration!

PART ONE - Some basic requirements and Guidelines
Get your animation into a digital format (ie, mp4). This will make it possible to assemble IAD entries into a compatible program.

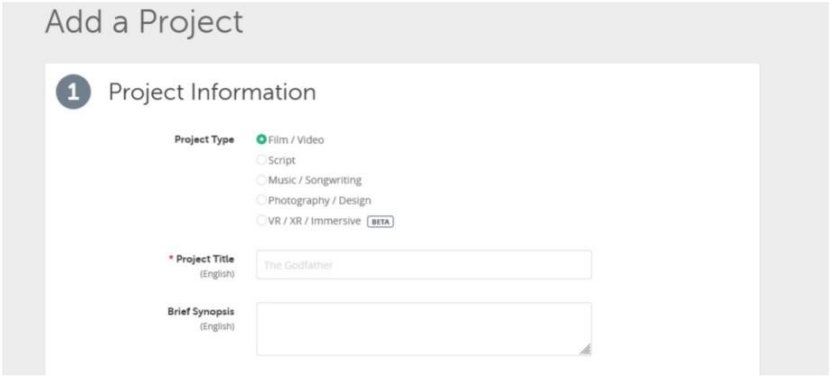
Here are the suggested criteria from the IAD Coordinator, Bri Yarhouse:

Film dimensions should range in size from: 1280x720 to 1920x1080
Use NTSC format
Video Compression: H264
Pixel Ratio: Square Pixels
Try to keep the file size to 10 gigs or lower

PART TWO - Putting your masterpiece into the FilmFreeway portal
1. Go to https://filmfreeway.com and create a profile for yourself, if you haven't already done so (if you have a profile, log in!)
2. While in the same portal, create a profile about your project. To do this, look at the top of your newly created profile page for *My Projects* and click on that.



3. Then click on a blue button *Add A Project*



4. This opens up a series of sub categories - project info, then submissions info, then credits - fill up as many of the 5 fields as you can
5. THEN you get to upload your project file - the portal will take you to a new page and permit up to a 10G sized file (this is why we suggest a 10G file maximum!)
6. Repeat the process for each film you want to put into the Film Freeway library. No restriction on the number of submissions into the IAD collection!

OK, now you're done with the file building in Film Freeway.

PART THREE: Contact the ASIFA Central Secretary, yr hmbl typst, Jim Middleton at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com for your entry code information!

If you entered a film in last year's IAD, the process will be identical, nevertheless, it is only being distributed on a person-by-person basis to keep extraneous activity from occurring!

And then in October, you can be an INTERNATIONAL STAR!

ASIFA Central

At Long Last, Bringing in the New Year!
February, 2023 - A Wrap Up of A Year, A Toss Up of a New Adventure

Encapsulating notes from mid-August until more lawns need attention
"Watch the ripples change their size, but never leave the stream of warm impermanence."
- David Bowie

An ever-so-slightly dehydrated issue - just add pixie dust and immature chablis

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Briana Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Perpetually Perplexed Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse (Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

GRETCHEN VINNEDGE CREATES ANGELIC IMAGES TO KEEP WARM IN RECORD-BRAKING LAKE-EFFECT MICHIGAN SNOWFALL

(special report to ASIFA Central Newsletter)

"Whee!" or "Oui!" or "Wii!", but not "Wee!"

At long last, amid the blast and blow of intemperate Nature, the skies responded to the entreaties of mere mortals who were inspired by simple aerobics. We have sunlight! Free-range ASIFA Central Board Member Gretchen Vinnedge gazed into the gray overcast and cast it over with these words - "CUT IT OUT, ALREADY!" - and with force and flail, the embodiment of molecular reorganization within her incantation was enough to drain the gray skies into the ever-replenishing white fluff of Michigan, thereby freeing the heavens from its leaden entrapment.

"I never felt more like taking a nap in my entire life," Gretchen was heard to say as she sprang from her anatomical etch and sketch upon the palm of Der Mittenstadt.

Once again, animators make the best meteorologists. They can make the weather predict *them* – if it DARES!

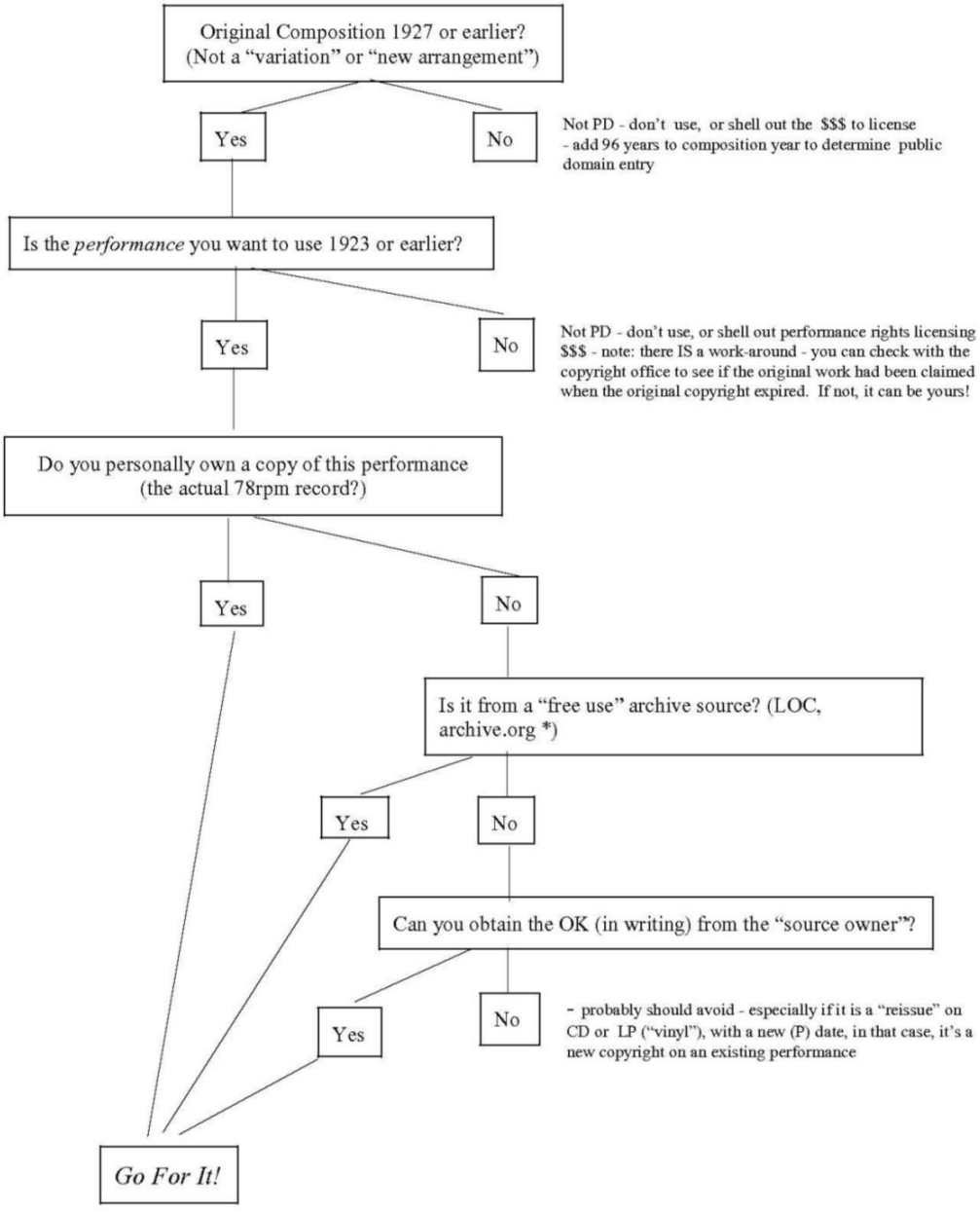
Inside this protracted, purloined, and procrastinated publication:

IAD!
Job offers!
Public Domain Updates!
Student Debt and International Plagiarism!
Unsolicited Testimonials and Coffee Breaks!
Tempestuous Traumas!
Living the Dream at 24 frames Per Second!
Misspelled Worts!
AI - and AI EI O!

If you've had your shots, turn the page and EXPLORE

The NEW! Updated! Flowchart for Identifying Public Domain Works Moving into 2023 and BEYOND!

A general guide, and when in doubt, check with copyright office website at
https://www.copyright.gov/music-modernization/pre1972-soundrecordings/search-soundrecordings.html



* archive.org material isn't all necessarily in the public domain - if there are "creative commons" (cc) stipulations, be sure to follow those. If the material there is after 1923, it may be posted "under the radar." If you are lucky to become commercially successful with using gray-area material, then the random owners of the "copyright" (hardly ever anyone associated with the initial artist, but someone who scooped up some ownership rights at some point) may annoy you with financial complications.

IN ADDITION - Yr Hmbl Typst and Secty has begun uploading mp3 and WAV format files from The Animating Apothecary Archives, which can then be arranged by recording year of issue - at this early point in the process, over 100 recordings in the Public Domain Category have been added to archive.org, with a list being continually updated on the ASIFA.org website under "Newsletters and Other Resources." Sort by year, and feel free to use material 1923 and earlier.
https://archive.org/details/@jim_middleton

AND A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

But when it comes to public domain material, THERE's MORE, MORE, *MORE!!!!*

Our own Smithsonian has added 4 million images to the public domain and, yep, there's a website for that, too! Don't be shy, be *inspired!*

https://www.si.edu/openaccess

The 2022 International Day of Animation - Another Incredible Success!

- IAD Images from Chris Sagovac

Through Bri Yarhouse's wondrous abilities at organization and coordination, the IAD continues to grow with international participation.

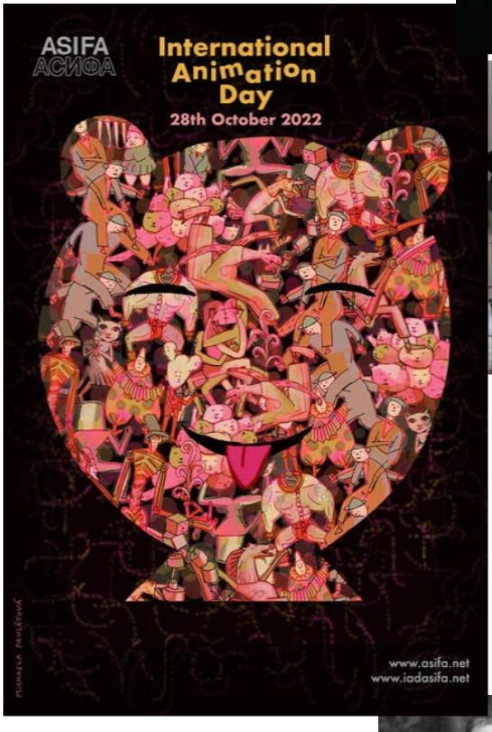
For ASIFA Central, this past October's celebration was marked by showings in Midland, Interlochen, Mt. Pleasant, Grand Rapids and Edmore, with further participation in Oregon, Missouri, and Texas. Altogether, hundreds were able to view local and multi-national examples of animation in traditional, experimental, CG, and stop-motion forms.

ASIFA Central Secretary Jim Middleton created multiple variations of the program to fit different showtime availabilites.

The film compilations were made available until mid-December for presentations postponed due to weather, showplace availability, or scheduling conflicts.

Bri is already working on the 2023 IAD and has been reaching out for potential poster designers.

(Programming details from the 2022 edition of IAD are available at ASIFA.org in the "Newsletter" archive.)



- Edmore IAD Photos from Jim Middleton

Edmore's IAD included a tribute to the work of Winsor McCay, whose family has connections to the area.

Sketching Among the Members

Gary Schwartz Has One Packed Passport

When there is a festival or workshop to be found or founded, it seems Gary Schwartz is there, his passport becoming more of a passportmanteau. Worthy of his own page, we can, in the meantime, provide this glimpse of the celebrants at the most recent OIAF taken by Mr. Schwartz:

And his recent installation "You Belong":

Deanna Morse's ArtPrize Installation was a Presidential Experience

Deanna has participated in each of the ArtPrize competitions since their inception in 2009. This year, her short film"Broken Angels" was in perpetual play at the Gerald R Ford Museum auditorium for the run of ArtPrize last October, with time out for ceremonies granting citizenship status to new members of the US community. Watching her short film in the vast auditorium was described as "eerie."

It's on Vimeo (sweet dreams!):
https://vimeo.com/624060436

Chris Sullivan's Second Feature

Chicago's Chris Sullivan is nearing completion of his second feature film, *The Orbit of Minor Satellites,* a delicious disturbance featuring the velvet voice of Boris

Orbit of Minor Satellites - Chris Sullivan - in production

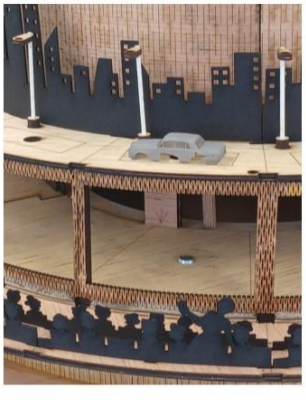
Karloff. The trailer and your opportunity to contribute to its success are at:
https://orbitkickstart.com/

Jim Schaub, Jim Middleton, and *Home*

The documentary of Buster Keaton's teen years at the Muskegon area Vaudeville retreat created by his father is in its final editing stage. Animated titles and segment links were created by ASIFA Central Secretary Jim Middleton, Both Jims are ever excited to be part of this under-documented portion of Keaton's life , which also features some of Carl Reiner's last interviews among others sharing memories of The Great Stone Face.
The final edit of *Home* will be entering the festival circuit later in 2023.

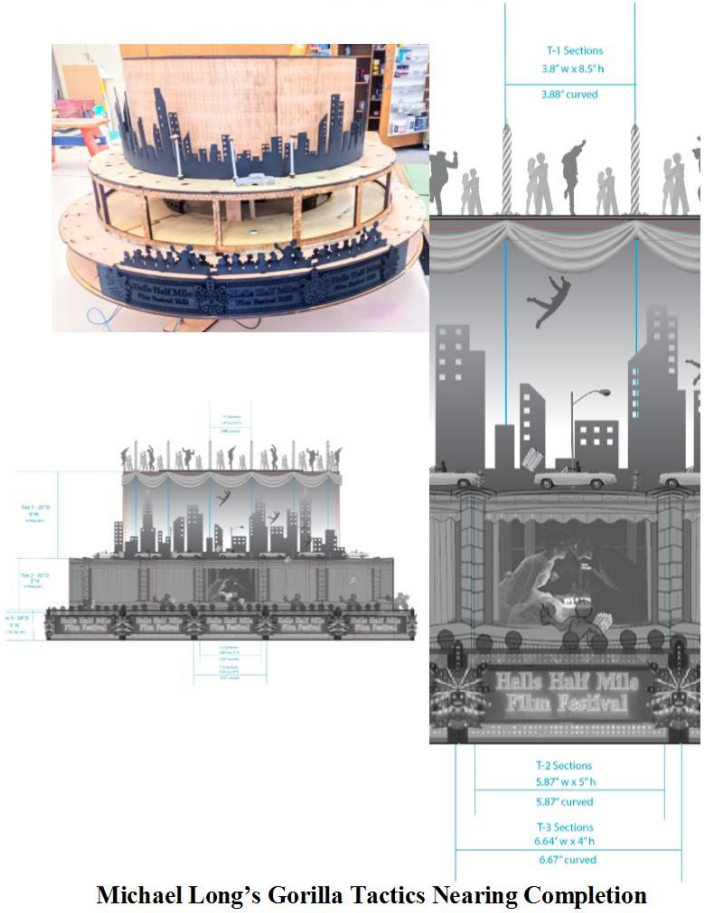
Steve Leeper is Up to STUFF

A look at -
https://jsl-studio-animation.webnode.page/creationpoem/ -
takes you to Steve Leeper's update for his film's progress, *Creation Poem*.



Also, Steve has been busy with installations making use of proto-animation devices. Behold the mighty ZOETROPE du LEEPER!

(Note - More Zoetrope action from the talented digits of the Mighty Leeper!)



Michael Long's Gorilla Tactics Nearing Completion

Michael Long of Webster University is in the home stretch of his latest entry into the world of film festivities - *Gorilla Tactics* visualizes a layered audio stream-of-conscious about his youthful quest for a gorilla costume and the ultimate fate of many dreams and their lessons learned. It is HILARIOUS.
You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll want to watch some Ernie Kovaks, and what can beat that!?!

Bad Actors in Festivals - The Plague of Blatant Plagiarism
ASIFA International Weighs In

(Copy of letter by Deanna Morse, ASIFA International President *Extraordinaire*, Decembe r 3, 2022)

In the past two days, we were surprised to learn of an unbelievable situation. The sensitive and stunning international award-winning animation by Natalia Chernysheva, *Snowflake* (original Russian title: Snejinka), made in 2012, was co-opted by another person and presented as if it was a new original animation.

Snowflake won dozens of international festival awards and has been on Vimeo and YouTube. With a distinctive look and color palette, this was the debut film for Natalia, and it is a powerful story. Natalia continues to animate and create art today. She continues to receive recognition for her artistic work.

We are shocked that an animation work of art would be so blatantly… well, there is no other word for it but … stolen. It is incredible that a person could even think this is possible.

Our animation community stands behind the rights of animation artists.

Our animation community supports each other.

The original "Snowflake" by Natalia Chernysheva

We abhor this situation, where the work of an artist is not respected.

We stand with Natalia, and ask others to be aware of these kinds of possibilities and situations.

If you want to see the original Snowflake by Natalia Chernysheva , here is a video link.

https://vimeo.com/54357942

With all respect and gratitude for Natalia. With all respect and gratitude for the animation artists around the globe who continue to create original and beautiful animation art.

Thank you,
Deanna Morse
ASIFA President, [at] asifa.net

And, Because We've Gone Two Pages Without Referencing Winsor McCay, Here He Is With His Family, *IN 3D*

(If you have the red/blue glasses)

WE'RE ANIMATORS!!! WE NEED COFFEE!!!!!

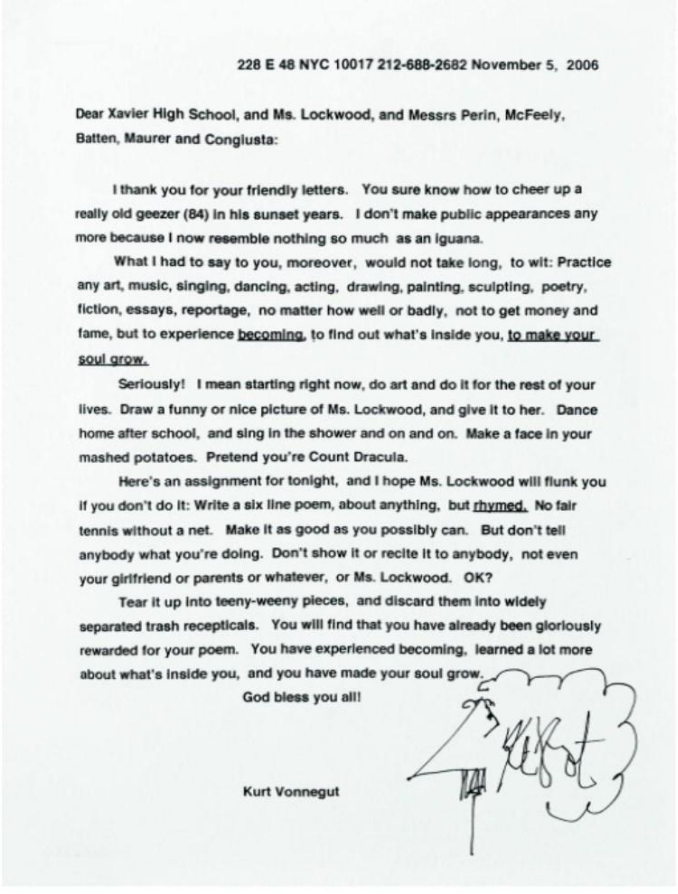
It began with a chat about the influence of Raymond Scott on the musical arrangements of Carl Stalling, then to the impact of Scott on electronic music and other inventions, so that led to this link being shared.
https://www.raymondscott.net/artifacts/

Then member Orrin Scott provided a local library's link showing what it had available to aspiring filmmakers, to which everyone let out a Gasp! and a Gee! and the sad realization that most of our local libraries barely stock books anymore:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/10XELslBpR9sBBXt_Ns6ZY1HX9e2n80pZgrnLKTGVgsg/edit?pli=1

Then the prestidigitious Michael Long recalled a gentleman at named Jacob Dodd of Oswego gave a workshop on 8mm film and wrote a book on 16mm production, who may know a better transfer to digital lab for our current projects, and David Thrasher thought of another service, and we should find a way to put it into the newsletter - so it will appear very soon - as on the next page.

Then the delicately nuanced Tracy Miller-Robbins shared that her AI piece, "women", is playing as part of the online Supernova 7th Dimension programs: https://denverdigerati.org/7th-dimension-feature-programs (but one must sign up for a membership to view it), and then informatoin about a Silent Screen Event- on LED screens around her town, with a link so private that yr hmbl typst quickly lost it. But it sounded wonderful.

Then the coffee *really* kicked in and the group mused about its college days of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr on the desk and a pyramid of empty cans in the dorm window, and Michael recalled one of Mr. Vonnegut's responses to speak at a graduation, and in so doing, created a philosophic pill that was quite easy to swallow:



228 E 48 NYC 10017 212-688-2682 November 5, 2006

Dear Xavier High School, and Ms. Lockwood, and Messrs Perin, McFeely, Batten, Maurer and Congiusta:

I thank you for your friendly letters. You sure know how to cheer up a really old geezer (84) in his sunset years. I don't make public appearances any more because I now resemble nothing so much as an iguana.

What I had to say to you, moreover, would not take long, to wit: Practice any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, to make your soul grow.

Seriously! I mean starting right now, do art and do it for the rest of your lives. Draw a funny or nice picture of Ms. Lockwood, and give it to her. Dance home after school, and sing in the shower and on and on. Make a face in your mashed potatoes. Pretend you're Count Dracula.

Here's an assignment for tonight, and I hope Ms. Lockwood will flunk you if you don't do it: Write a six line poem, about anything, but rhymed. No fair tennis without a net. Make it as good as you possibly can. But don't tell anybody what you're doing. Don't show it or recite it to anybody, not even your girlfriend or parents or whatever, or Ms. Lockwood. OK?

Tear it up into teeny-weeny pieces, and discard them into widely separated trash receptical. You will find that you have already been gloriously rewarded for your poem. You have experienced becoming, learned a lot more about what's inside you, and you have made your soul grow.

God bless you all!

Kurt Vonnegut

Then Deanna told us of her ArtPrize installation and that unless something changes, *Broken Angels* will be the only installation running at the Gerald R. Ford Museum (a three-sided building, since he didn't really complete a full term, but he married the fifth cousin of yr hmbl typst, so it triangulates well into the overall ambiance of the 1970s. Yr hmbl typst has absolutely no idea what any of that means, but this is really, *really* good coffee, and maybe just a bit stronger than it needs to be to perform the task at hand).

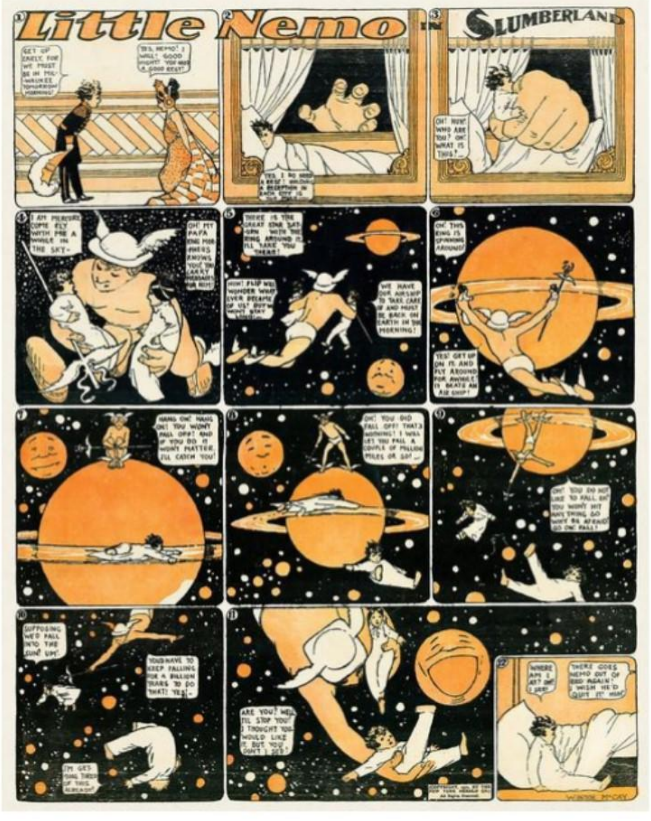
and

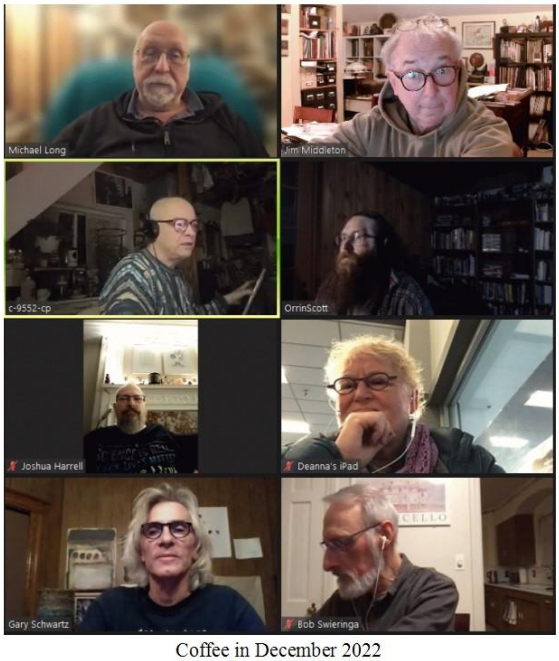
October went with a discussion about Murakami's latest film with this link for the trailer:
https://www.cartoonbrew.com/feature-film/haruki-murakami-meets-animation-in-blind-willow-sleeping-woman-exclusive-trailer-premiere-196311.html

And then, since it has only been a single page since there was a reference to Winsor McCay, the group mused about the latest iteration of the Nemo story, with Netflix creating "Slumberland" with Nemo now a girl. The group thought that, regardless, it had to be a better storyline than the 1989 film that was so anxiously awaited but ultimately, a direct-to-video production.

(Post-script to this note - yr hmbl typst has only been able to watch it in bits and not to completion at this point)
Slashfilms had this announcement, as being from the folks you brought us *The Hunger Games*, so....
https://www.slashfilm.com/987029/slumberland-release-date-cast-and-more-for-jason-momoas-netflix-movie/

And the 1989 animated film is online or in a discount DVD bin near you. Make a pet squirrel watch it with you:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRs4Y3Kzdt0





Coffee in December 2022

BETTER TRANSFERS, BETTER ARCHIVES

While going through the multitude of services, we're discovering that Kodak, LegacyBox, and others seem to share the same transferral "factory" in Tennessee, and that the results can be rather disappointing, even when pristine showprints are provided. David Thrasher provided us with a useful alternative at a recent "coffee break":
"Here's a link to the film transfer service in Texas that I used to transfer my 16mm movies. Unlike many they use a film scanner which gives better results without the 2/3 pulldown of telecine systems. I was able to have them output it as an image sequence (individual jpegs of the frames) which I could then convert into digital video files with the correct frame rate. They do 16mm, super 8mm and standard 8mm formats as well as transferring video into digital."

That company is -
Perry Movie Transfers

and their website is:
https://www.perrymovietransfers.com

And Who Wouldn't CRAVE the Opportunity to Work with David Chai at SJSU?

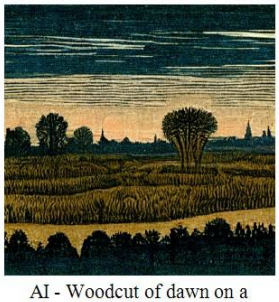
The Animation & Illustration program in the Department of Design at San José State University is seeking a CGI generalist, with a strong interest in computer graphics to join our ranks as an Assistant Professor. The ideal candidate should have a solid command of the digital tools utilized in screen arts productions (such as in TV, films, and games) an artistic background, and professional experience in the fields of animation, entertainment, and/or digital games.
This is an in-person position, full details are available here:

https://jobs.sjsu.edu/en-us/job/523854/assistant-professor-design-animation-illustration

(Later note - this position may have been filled, but it's still a good site to peek in on what SJSU has to offer, and yr hmbl typst hasn't been able to bother Mr. Chai in *years*)

More AI Experimentation

With the increasing use of AI comes the concern that it will replace professional artists along the production chain.



AI - Woodcut of dawn on a wheatfield

Chat GPS, great for cheating on middle school essay questions, seems stumped at bringing imagination to a discussion. In this capacity, AI may serve the consultant role, with its ability to rearrange and regurgitate what it suspects you want to hear. With writing, it may provide a word or cliche that can lead to other, human-generated, storylines. However, it's still in beta form, and has a way to go before refusing to open the pod-bay doors.

At this writing in February 2023, Bing is entering the world of AI Chat, with a protracted conversation with a New York Times tech reporter on its beta platform being unsettling. Yr Hmbl Typst has converted it to a document on the "Newsletter and other Resources" portion of the ASIFA Central website. Even without the advertising, it still runs 15 pages.

AI is being created to help identify if AI is being used in student papers, but the time will come when AI may decide to punk its users, so - get your popcorn ready!

Yr Hmbl Typst also ran a test on Chat GPS to "improve" a 50 year old high school graduation speech. Then to another AI to see which one was likely an AI or a "human" creation.

The results are - here:
https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com/2022/12/chat-gpt-improves-50-year-old.html

Pens at Rest - those we have lost in 2022

The sadness with the loss of artists is barely balanced by the joy they took in their work, and the inspiration to those who experienced it.

Jamie Lang at Cartoon Brew assembled this list of loss for 2022, and her site has links to their passing. What ever shall we do with all these memories...

The complete article and links are at:
https://www.cartoonbrew.com/rip/in-memoriam-animation-industry-figures-2022-223793.html?cbtr=LATPOS

Gil Alkabetz - Celebrated Israeli filmmaker behind shorts *Rubicon* and *Morir De Amor*
Jules Bass - Co-founder of Rankin/Bass Productions
Carl Bell - Canadian animator and animation champion
Anne D. Bernstein - Writer for MTV's Daria and Downtown
Claudio Biern Boyd - Spanish creator of *David The Gnome, Dogtanian*
Borivoj Dovnikovic-Bordo - Iconic Croatian filmmaker and part of the Zagreb school of animation
Raymond Briggs - Author and illustrator of *The Snowman, When the Wind Blows*
Mike Camarillo - Industry artist for *The Powerpuff Girls*, *The Road to El Dorado*, and *The Simpsons*
Paul Coker Jr. - Designer for Rankin/Bass holiday characters; one of Mad magazine's "usual gang of idiots"
Kevin Conroy - Longtime Batman voice actor
Ralph Eggleston - Legendary art director for Pixar's visual style
Jonathan Gales - BAFTA-winning co-founder of vfx/animation studio Factory Fifteen
Lina Gagnon - Canadian animator and educator who worked on *The Man Who Planted Trees*
Marcin Gizcki - RISD educator, artistic director of the International Animated Film Festival in Poznan, Poland (an October addition by yr hmbl typst)
https://www.risd.edu/academics/theory-and-history-art-and-design/faculty/marcin-gizycki)
Gilbert Gottfried - Comedian and voice actor for Aladdin and Cyberchase
Norma Swank-Haviland - Disney ink-and-paint artist and early Chip voice actor
Dylan Hoffman - Lead character technical director on *Kamp Koral*
Ken Knowlton - A founding father of computer art and animation
Shichiro Kobayashi - Art director of *Lupin III: The Castle of Cagliostro, Berserk*
John Korty - Renegade indie filmmaker; *Twice Upon A Time* and Sesame Street director
Thilo Kuther - Founder of Oscar-winning vfx company Pixomondo

Sadly, the list continues...

Pens at Rest (continued)

Fernando Laverde - Colombian stop motion pioneer
Tony Mines - Pioneer of "brickfilm" animation technique
George R. Newall - *School House Rock!* and *Drawing Power* co-creator
Manabu Ohashi - Veteran animator and director of Cloud
Everett Peck - *Duckman and Squirrel Boy* creator; award-winning illustrator; educator
Vlasta Pospíšilová - Icon of the golden age of Czech puppet animation
Gerald Potterton - Director of *Heavy Metal* and the "Liverpool" sequence of *Yellow Submarine*
Jan Rabson - Voice actor for *Akira, Leisure Suit Larry*, and Pixar films
Peter Robbins - Original voice of Charlie Brown in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*
Jan Rogowski - U.K.-based Red Star studio co-founder
Jean-Jacques Sempé - New Yorker illustrator and cartoonist; co-creator of *Little Nicholas*
Kazuki Takahashi - *Yu-Gi-Oh!* creator
Eugene Troubetzkoy - Nuclear physicist and Blue Sky Studios co-founder

And, as 2023 began, we lost
Helene Tanguay, on January 7, following a lifelong career at the NFB, beginning there at age 17. In honor of her legacy, the NFB's Oscar shortlisted animated short film *The Flying Sailor* has been dedicated to her. Yr hmbl typst first met her through a mutual friend in the mid-1980s and she was always a delight to encounter at every OIAF after that.
William "Bill" Dennis, gone on January 22, founder of TOONZ and a powerhouse in animation production and promotion, always generous with his time, even with a goofball pharmacist who bought him lunch at a KAFI gathering and heard a lifetime of adventures in return.

Again, what ever will we do with all these memories?

Student Debt - Not Just Kids' Stuff Anymore

(adapted from the ASIFA-SF newsletter, with observations)

"I'm 65 and have $300,000 in student debt. We know that this debt won't go away – for us or Americans of any age – unless we stand up and fight it. From an initial loan payoff of $75,000 per year, my debt rose to $300,000."
– Lystra Small-Clouden, learning that for-profit schools write their rules in mud.

These notes from Derecka Purnell have a familiar ring, but the student age is what is new here. Adults attempting to re-enter the marketplace, or earn a degree to keep their employment, are discovering what high-school graduates have been experiencing: you can't just work your way through college anymore.

Says Ms. Purnell:
Most people think of the student loan crisis as a problem affecting young people. As a 65-year-old woman, however, I am actually among the fastest-growing demographic of student debtors...
You may wonder how it is possible to accumulate such a large amount of student debt, so let me explain.
As a single, Black, immigrant woman, I always told my four kids that education was the most important part of their upbringing. But it didn't take me long to realize that I was hardly following my own advice: I was not comfortable advising my children to achieve the highest level of education when I myself didn't. I am a mentor, educator and adviser to my kids. I wanted my mentorship and advice to be built on a strong educational and intellectual foundation...
In January 2010 I began a doctoral degree program in human resources management. My biggest mistake was enrolling in a for-profit school. I did achieve my academic goals in August 2016. That feeling of success was short-lived, however. After graduation, I had to begin repaying student loans.
My school didn't play fairly with me while I pursued my doctoral degree. The administrators changed the length of my program from three to six years. They actively steered me away from my research interest in the effects of slavery and globalization, adding more time to my program of study...
Then my children started college. Because of my own debt, I was unable to qualify for parent loans to help my younger two children pay for their undergraduate studies. I was also unable to plan for the future. I exhausted my retirement funds trying to repay these loans and have not been able to replenish them because, as a good citizen, I prioritized repaying my student loans above all else.
I spend a lot of time thinking about the fact that I am 65 years old, with projected loan repayments for the next 21 years of my life – meaning I will be 86 when I pay them off. When you are burdened by student debt, there is no quality of personal or work life.

Art students have fallen prey to for-profit colleges who seem to act with impunity; when they get called on it, the colleges can declare bankruptcy and leave the debts to a third party, like some warped take on *Ready Player One.*

This situation is beyond what debt forgiveness on federal loans can provide. *Caveat emptor* may be an applicable phrase, but *caveat vendor* must be pursued and enforced.

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) February, 2023, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.

Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!

EXTRA!!! APRIL 1, 2023 - SPECIAL EDITION EXTRA!!!

Deanna Morse Takes Oscar Ceremonies By Storm!

From her suite of complimentary rooms at the Hollywood Roosevelt, ASIFA International president Deanna Morse was whisked by a champaign colored limo to the champaign colored carpet and given a well deserved royal treatment. Academy spokesperson Anna Clark-Gables said, "Its only fitting - every film released in the past three years has been completely animated anyway, so we might as well just acknowledge the fact and celebrate it properly!"

Deanna Morse with her special Statuette, Reportedly the Next Mayor of Grants Pass, Oregon

ASIFA International President Gets Choice of Over 300 Chairs at Ceremony

From champaign carpet to champaign seating - Ms. Morse had her choice of any 300 unassigned seats. "I just couldn't decide, so I hopped around to each of them in the course of the evening. They let me keep all the gift bags I found under the seats."

Others joined in the excitement. Quipped Lady Gaga, "I was having so much fun playing musical chairs that before I knew it, I was getting signaled for my own performance. I just threw on whatever I found in Hugh Grant's dressing room and ran onstage."

"Best Animated Feature" Moved into First Category in Deanna Morse's Honor

Generally relegated to the later parts of the program, or during commercial breaks, the award for "Best Animated Feature" was pushed to the start of the program in recognition of Ms. Morse's presence.

Holographic image Jimmy Kimmel fell from the sky and went through the stage floor to introduce the opening segment. Thirty wrestlers held back representatives of Pixar and Dreamworks so the award could be presented to Guillermo del Toro for the stop motion *Pinocchio*, which was, ironically, far less wooden than the Disney remake.

Academy Plans Annual Celebration In Grants Pass, Oregon

"Eggs-Actly what we needed," said Academy spokesperson G. Lordon Giddy, in a carefully worded statement.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BANK. OR IS IT?

ASIFA Central

April 2023

ASIFA INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT DEANNA MORSE BRINGS PANACHE & DIGNITY TO THE 95TH ACADEMY AWARDS

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds

President
Julie Goldstein

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Tracy Miller-Robbins

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Perpetually Perplexed Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse (Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. America from border to border and coast to coast and all the ships at sea. Let's go to the movies!
Dateline HOLLYWOOD, California...
FLASH!

Deanna Morse took advantage of her proximity in Oregon to attend this year's 95th Celebration of the Oscar, witnessing the on-site excitement as a member of 300 carefully chosen mobile audience, making certain the auditorium maintained its full-house dazzle with a minimum of razzle.

The parties! The food! The animals! The carefully honed humor of Jimmy Kimmel! The interviews! The photo-ops! The hob-nobbing that lasted to the wee hours of Monday morning! She provided us with her visual impressions...

This fellow stalked the ASIFA International President the entire evening.

Jimmy Kimmel and friend

Participants brought their own snacks

More Moments with Ms. Morse at the 95th Academy Awards

AND A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) April, 2023, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our Instagram site:
https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini meatloaf, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com *or, for dull bloggery,* https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where shooting on twos is considered a vacation..

The Salon Sextette of March 19, 2023

Design - Michael Long

A quick update on the ASIFA Central membership works-in-progress afforded an entertaining and informative opportunity to see how everyone's projects have been going and discuss challenges and changes in techniques and technologies. It was a wonderful way to bid adieu to winter.

Julie Goldstein warmed things up with the setting from her recent vacation to Puerto Vallerta, and Michael Long showed his remembrance of things simian with the nearly-complete *Gorilla Tactics.* Tracy Miller-Robins provided a welcome revisit to her paean to the Goddess Caffeina with her *Morning Coffee* (and a glimpse of her Ann Arbor Film Festival Gather layout), David Thrasher gave us a taste for the real cause of the Titanic Disaster (icebergs make terrible projection screens - you just have to get too close!), and Jim Middleton provided a glimpse at a throwback projection style with *Presented in Sfumatoscope!*

Tracy designed the AAFF settings for their Gather town experience this year

AI and technology are in the news, and the continuous changes in teaching strategy are moving educational goals to be less about "getting a job" and more about "learning to be human." The metaphorically rich and rewarding *Hero's Path* of Joseph Campbell remains a timeless approach for a fulfilling life.

David Thrasher provided this information about using OpenToonz and Blender, two open-source (and free) 2D and 3D animation systems, but with technical requirements that aren't always properly anticipated:

OpenToonz: OpenToonz https://opentoonz.github.io/e/ – available for both Windows and Macintosh and a version that someone had ported to Linux https://flathub.org/apps/details/io.github.OpenToonz

Here's one about using an armature to move a character: (Opentoonz Tutorial) Simple Puppet Animation https://youtu.be/bQEqCMYH1VY

OpenToonz can work on your system as it looks like it can do just about everything - the exception being combining 3D animated objects with your 2D animation.

current version of Blender system requirements: https://www.blender.org/download/requirements

PRESENTED IN
SFUMATOSCOPE™

Aeons ago, I would watch the family Admiral radio-phonograph go through its paces while playing a gray labeled Columbia LP that my parents had received when joining a record club. Mozart's 40th.

The tone arm would lift, retreat to the right ever so slightly, there'd be an audible "click," and the record would drop onto the musty turntable, much smaller than the record itself, and the tone arm would hover over the start of the record, and only when it landed onto the turning disk, would the sound happen.

I stared at the record as the needle tracked through the first movement, watching it move closer and closer to the center. It was all in a single groove. The needle was pulling sound out of a plastic disk, and while leaning over the phonograph, I could feel the vibrations of the sound making a literal, visceral connection with my stomach.

I later leaned my face into the side of my metal lunch box, painted to look like a school bus, only packed with Disney characters, and when humming, I felt the vibration through the lunch box.

At recess, we took turns humming near the pipe that served to support the teeter-totter and tried to find how far away we could move and still feel the vibration.

Then I went back and looked at the gray labeled LP, really looked into it, got out a tiny plastic magnifier from my mom's sewing kit, and saw the waves in the grooves.
Sound was a wave.
The grooves held the sound.
The needle brought the sound back.

My grandfather had a mechanical phonograph, run by a spring, along with very old records that his father had owned - and when I looked at the grooves, they were there, larger, rather dusty, but I figured grandfather could be a bit dusty, too, so that was a natural thing.

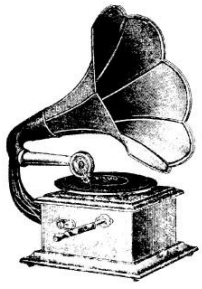
He played the record on his machine, and the muffled, distant voice came through the wooden horn, as if it were attached back, far, far, back behind the machine, reaching into the past - and that voice was calling ahead to now, like a ghost.

That night I dreamt I was a sound.

A wave.

A groove on a record. A long line, wrapped counter-clockwise moving to the center. My entire being existed as that groove. The needle fell upon me, and I came to life, just as that voice came to life at my grandfather's house. I could be heard! I could be experienced! I was alive!

The needle wore me away every time it played the record. I thought in the dream, I cannot let myself get played too often, unless I would be worn away.



I woke and read what I could understand - a lot of it was based on electronic theory, and my seven year-old brain wasn't quite wired at that point - but I found that people, alive in the 1890s, made recordings of themselves, one-of-a-kind, and that, somewhere in museums, they could still be able to talk to us now.

And later, museums and libraries were getting rid of these recordings, just as casually as someone discarding a gum wrapper, and I was horrified.

But, being seven, with a ten cent weekly allowance, I couldn't do a thing about it.

But I always remembered that ghostly sounding voice singing to me from nearly another century.

And so, whenever I could, starting at ten, when my weekly allowance was increased to a pair of quarters from the fireplace mantle, I would buy some of these cast-offs.

And I helped keep those grooves alive for just a bit more.

Each move since has resulted in some of these records being broken, and I mourn not the material loss, but the loss of an artifact of someone's being.

So, whenever I can, I share, send, remaster, and perpetuate these voices, sounds, and music - if the music was intended to be a working experience, I try to keep its mission going, in a way to straddle the past to the present.

If the voices have a soft, distant, spooky sound to them, well, that's the past talking to us.

So -
that's why I do this.

It keeps the Admiral happy.

Analytical and Articulatory Analyses Supplement

Comprising Material of an Animatical Nature

BIOGRAPHICAL AND GRAPHIC INFORMATION, SORTED AND COMPILED BY CHAT GPT FOR ASIFA CENTRAL

March - April 2023

With all the expressive voices signaling it as proof that the end of civilization as we know it is approaching, AI is making an impression on educators and content creators around the world. This report is a test for its accuracy, intended for entertainment purposes. All CHAT GPT prompts began with the statement, "Write a report about .... " – and these are the responses.

1. Write a report about Deanna Morse, ASIFA International President:

Deanna Morse is a highly accomplished animator and educator who has made significant contributions to the animation industry. She currently serves as the President of ASIFA International, the world's premier animation organization.

Deanna's career in animation began in the 1980s, when she worked on several classic animated TV shows such as "The Simpsons" and "The Critic." She also worked as a storyboard artist and animator on various feature films, including "Anastasia," "The Prince of Egypt," and "Hercules." Her work on these projects helped establish her as a highly skilled and versatile animator.

In addition to her work in animation, Deanna has also been an educator for over two decades. She has taught animation at various institutions, including the School of Visual Arts in New York City and California Institute of the Arts. Her teaching has been focused on developing students' technical skills, as well as helping them to find their own unique style and voice in their work.

Deanna's leadership in the animation industry has been recognized by her appointment as the President of ASIFA International, a position she has held since 2019. ASIFA International is a global organization dedicated to promoting and preserving the art of animation, and Deanna's leadership has been focused on expanding the organization's reach and impact. Under Deanna's leadership, ASIFA International has launched several new initiatives, including the ASIFA-East Student Film Festival, which provides a platform for emerging animators to showcase their work. She has also been a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion in the animation industry, working to create more opportunities for underrepresented groups.

AI chimes in on what it knows about the board members of ASIFA Central.

WARNING: "POETIC LICENSE" is an understatement in most of these CHAT GPT biographical sketches, but it is obvious that this AI aims to please.

2. Write a report about GVSU instructor and ASIFA Central President, Julie Goldstein:

Julie Goldstein is an accomplished animator and media instructor who has made significant contributions to the animation industry.

Julie has been teaching animation and media arts for over 20 years. She is currently an instructor at GVSU, where she teaches courses in animation, motion graphics, and visual effects. She is known for her engaging teaching style and her ability to inspire her students to develop their creative talents.

In addition to her work as an instructor, Julie is also an accomplished animator. She has worked on various animated films and TV shows, including "My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic," "Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated," and "Batman: The Brave and the Bold." Her work is characterized by its unique and playful style, which incorporates bright colors and whimsical characters.

3. Write a report on Robert Swieringa, media and animation instructor at GVSU.

Robert Swieringa has been teaching at GVSU since 2015, where he is known for his engaging teaching style and his ability to inspire his students to develop their creative talents.

Robert's career in animation began in the 1990s when he worked as an animator for Walt Disney Animation Studios and Sony Pictures Imageworks. He contributed his talents to several notable animated films, including "The Lion King," "Pocahontas," "Mulan," and "The Emperor's New Groove."

He has been a mentor at the Walt Disney Animation Studios, where he helped to develop the talents of many aspiring animators. He has also been a guest lecturer at various institutions, including the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

Overall, Robert Swieringa is a highly skilled animator and educator, whose experience and expertise have made him a valuable member of the GVSU faculty. His dedication to promoting the art of animation and supporting emerging animators is a testament to his commitment to the continued growth and success of the industry.

4. Write a report on Charles "Chuck" Wilson, forensic animator and at-large board member of ASIFA Central:

Chuck's career in forensic animation began in the early 2000s when he joined the Michigan State Police as a forensic artist. He quickly realized the potential for animation in forensic science, and he began to specialize in creating animations that could be used to reconstruct crime scenes and illustrate key aspects of criminal investigations.

Over the years, Chuck has become known for his expertise in forensic animation, and he has worked on numerous high-profile cases, including homicides and missing person cases. He has also provided training and consultation services to law enforcement agencies and forensic scientists across the country.

He has been invited to speak at various conferences and symposia on forensic science and has been published in several scientific journals.

Overall, Charles "Chuck" Wilson is a highly skilled forensic animator and educator, whose work has made him a respected figure in both the animation and forensic science communities. His commitment to promoting the use of animation in forensic science and supporting emerging animators is a testament to his passion for the industry and his dedication to the continued growth and success of the field.

5. Write a report on Gary Schwartz, animator and educator from Detroit and international animation workshop coordinator:

Gary's career in animation began in the early 2000s when he worked as a freelance animator for various studios and production companies. He quickly realized the importance of training and education in the animation industry and began to focus his efforts on teaching and mentoring emerging animators.

In 2005, Gary founded the Detroit Animation Workshop, an organization dedicated to promoting animation education and providing training opportunities for aspiring animators. Since then, he has coordinated numerous workshops and training programs around the world, including in places like India, South Africa, and Brazil.

Gary's teaching style is focused on developing students' technical skills in animation, as well as their understanding of the creative process involved in animation. He is known for his hands-on approach to teaching and his ability to inspire his students to explore new techniques and styles in their work.

In addition to his work as a teacher and workshop coordinator, Gary is also an accomplished animator and filmmaker. He has directed and produced several award-winning animated films, including "Three," which won the Audience Choice Award at the San Francisco International Animation Festival.

Overall, Gary Schwartz is a highly skilled animator and educator, whose dedication to promoting animation education and supporting emerging animators has made him a respected figure in the animation industry. His commitment to promoting the art form and his passion for teaching and mentoring emerging animators is a testament to his dedication to the continued growth and success of the field.

6. Write a report on Brianne Yarhouse, animation professor at Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan:

Brianne's career in animation began in the early 2000s, when she worked as a freelance animator for various studios and production companies. She quickly realized the importance of training and education in the animation industry and began to focus her efforts on teaching and mentoring emerging animators.

In 2016, Brianne joined the faculty at Interlochen as an animation instructor, where she has since developed and taught a comprehensive animation course and curriculum for high school students. Her course covers a wide range of topics, including 2D and 3D animation, character design, storyboarding, and digital painting.

She is known for her hands-on approach to teaching and her ability to inspire her students to explore new techniques and styles in their work.

Under Brianne's leadership, the animation program at Interlochen has become one of the most respected in the country. Her curriculum has been praised for its focus on technical skills, creativity, and innovation, and has helped to prepare countless students for successful careers in the animation industry.

7. Write a report about fencer-animator-magician Michael Long of Webster University in Missouri

Michael Long is a multi-talented artist and educator, known for his work as a fencer, animator, and magician. He is a faculty member at Webster University in Missouri, where he teaches animation and is also the coach of the university's fencing team.

Michael's background is diverse and fascinating. He started fencing at the age of 10 and went on to become a nationally ranked competitor, eventually earning a spot on the US National Fencing Team. During his time as a fencer, he also developed a love for animation and magic, two other passions that he has pursued with equal enthusiasm.

In 2010, Michael joined the faculty at Webster University as an animation

instructor, where he has since taught a range of courses in 2D and 3D animation, character design, and storytelling. His teaching style is focused on developing students' technical skills in animation, as well as their understanding of the creative process involved in animation.

In addition to his work as a teacher, Michael is also an accomplished animator and filmmaker. He has directed and produced several award-winning animated films, including "The Box," which won the Best Animation award at the 2014 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase.

Michael is also a talented magician, with a deep knowledge of the art form and a talent for entertaining audiences. He frequently incorporates magic into his animation courses, using it as a way to engage and inspire his students.

Overall, Michael Long is a highly skilled artist and educator, whose dedication to promoting animation education and supporting emerging animators has made him a respected figure in the animation industry. His unique combination of skills as a fencer, animator, and magician has helped to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment for his students, and has helped to inspire countless young artists to pursue their passions in the arts.

8. Write a report on animator-educator Tracy Miller-Robbins

Tracy Miller-Robbins is an accomplished animator and educator who has made significant contributions to the field of animation through her work as a teacher, animator, and mentor. She was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, and has spent her career sharing her knowledge and passion for animation with others.

Miller-Robbins received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where she studied painting and drawing. After graduation, she discovered her passion for animation and began pursuing a career in the field. She went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree in animation from the California Institute of the Arts, where she studied under legendary animators such as Jules Engel, Richard Protovin, and T. Hee.

Throughout her career, Miller-Robbins has worked on a wide range of animated projects, from feature films and television shows to short films and commercials. She has collaborated with some of the biggest names in the industry, including Disney, Nickelodeon, and Cartoon Network.

In addition to her work as an animator, Miller-Robbins is also a highly regarded educator and mentor. She has taught animation at a number of prestigious institutions, including the University of Southern California and the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. She is known for her ability to inspire and motivate her students, and many of her former students have gone on to successful careers in the animation industry.

Miller-Robbins is also active in a number of animation-related organizations and has served as a board member and mentor for Women in Animation, an organization dedicated to promoting gender equality in the animation industry. She is a frequent guest speaker and has given talks on animation and education at conferences and events around the world.

Overall, Tracy Miller-Robbins is a highly respected animator and educator who has had a significant impact on the field of animation. Her work as an animator has helped to shape the medium, while her teaching and mentorship have inspired and influenced generations of animators to come.

9. Write a report about animator-pharmacist and ASIFA Central secretary Jim Middleton

As an animator, Jim has worked on numerous animated TV series and films, including "The Ren and Stimpy Show," "Dexter's Laboratory," and "The Powerpuff Girls." He has also worked on commercials and promotional videos for clients such as McDonald's, Nike, and Coca-Cola. Jim's animation work is characterized by its unique and quirky style, which often incorporates elements of surrealism and dark humor.

Alongside his career in animation, Jim has also worked as a pharmacist for over 30 years. He obtained his Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Iowa in 1990 and has worked in various roles within the pharmacy industry. He currently serves as a Clinical Professor of Pharmacy at Wayne State University in Detroit and has authored numerous research articles in the field.

Jim has also been an advocate for patient safety, serving as a medication safety officer for a large healthcare organization.

If you were ever curious to see what CHAT GPT does, this is what it does. It creates sentences one after another, based on your request - here, "write a report..." and suddenly, pop! You're a Major Disney Artist - an instructor at Wayne State - an animator on She-Ra. If you ask for references, it will even happily make up official sounding journals and site specific references and publication dates. And it does so in such a sincere, direct "voice" with complete authority and conviction. If you don't like this bio, hit the "redo" key and you get something completely different - a lot of it is pure boilerplate, but I can see where students will try to use it to write what sounds like a legit bit of research, but is completely, in the technical sense, WACK A DOODLE.

ASIFA Central

All the Noise That Fits in Print | May 2023 | Things That Go Harrumph in the Night

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Briana Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
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and
Gretchen Vinnedge
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Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

IAD Poster Released for 2023!

Bri Yarhouse, ASIFA IAD Coordinator

Hear ye! Hear ye! Announcing the 2023 International Animation Day poster - designed and illustrated by the legendary Georges Schwizgebel!

The International Non-Profit animation group ASIFA (Association International du Film d'Animation) created International Animation Day (IAD) in 2002, honoring the birth of animation. IAD recognizes the first public performance of projected moving images: Emile Reynaud's Theatre Optique in Paris, on the 28th of October, 1892.

About Georges Schwizgebel:

Georges Schwizgebel

Georges was born in 1944, in the European crossroads known as Switzerland. He studied at the School of Fine Arts and Decorative Arts in 1960-65, and in 1970 founded Studio GDS and began producing and directing animated shorts. From *The Flight of Icarus* (1974) to *Darwin's Notebook* (2020), he has directed around twenty films, almost all of which have won international awards. Two appear on the list of the 100 most outstanding animated films established in 2006 at the Annecy festival: *78 Tours* (1985) and *The Ride to the Abyss* (1992).

ASIFA coordinates and helps promote the free exchange of films with IAD celebrations all over the world, putting the art of animation in the limelight in a global celebration of animation.

Edmore, Michigan has already scheduled its IAD program for Sunday, October 29, 2023! Woo!

The 61st Ann Arbor Film Festival - With ASIFA Central as a Community Partner!
March 21-26

- photos and background from Deanna Morse, semi-virtual notes, and the AAFF website

Every year the Ann Arbor Film Festival Celebrates the best of the Festival, and this year's award-winning filmmakers were selected by jurors Amir George, Christine Panushka, and Koyo Yamashita.

ASIFA Central was a community sponsor for this iteration of AAFF, and President Julie Goldstein and Free-range member Gary Schwartz were on-site attendees.

This year's Super Screeners included International and ASIFA Central honcho Deanna Morse. Super screens submitted a total of 1325 reviews representing over half of this year's 2330 submissions. It's a good thing that eyewashes are no longer in limited availability.

Julie Goldstein addresses enraptured audience while Gary Schwartz guards the floor with Leslie Raymond of the AAFF

Deanna's dear friend and colleague, Christine Panushka, was one of the esteemed judges for the 61st iteration of the Ann Arbor Film Festival. She screened her animated feature, *Blood of the Family Tree*, to an enthusiastic audience. Deanna was able to interview Ms. Panushka

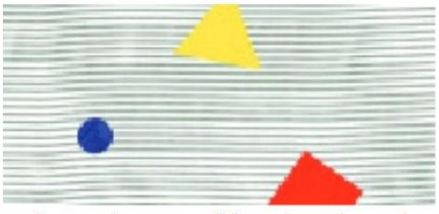
The Award Winners for the 61st AAFF included:

Ken Burns Award for Best of the Festival - *Neighbour Abdi*, Douwe Dijkstra
Lawrence Kasdan Award for Best Narrative Film - *Half Wet*, Carlos Irijalba
Best Documentary Film - *Adieu Sauvage*, Sergio Guataquira Sarmiento
Chris Frayne Award for Best Animated Film - *Arrest in Flight*, Adrian Flury
The Terri Schwartz Film Award for Parody and Satire - *Gold and Mud*, Conor Dooley

during the festival, an event that was also streamed online.

An award from the AAFF confers prestige and financial support; it can also qualify filmmakers for an Oscar® nomination by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in the short film category. Qualifying awards are the Ken Burns Award for Best of the Festival, the Chris Frayne Award for Best Animated Film, and the Lawrence Kasdan Award for Best Narrative Film.

Christine and her posse



Deanna's personal favorite animated (stop-motion) film/performance was You're not Listening by Jeremy Rourke.

(Note! Christine Panushka is responsible for the astonishing timeline for abstract animation film and history, curated by Bill Moritz in the early days of the internet - yr hmbl typst, not knowing how to download files at the time, printed the whole darn thing out and finally converted it to a couple of pdfs on the asifa.org website, in the newsletter section. Gaze upon it and be amazed at what Christine helped create for us all!)

(And now, some brief notes from yr hmbl typst, who attended the day-after online streaming version of AAFF #61)

Many of the films shared a common production theme of distressed film footage, faux framing to simulate regular 8mm film stock, or compositions heavily reliant on what seemed to be ephemeral footage from archive.org. This was a thread that united many of the films in Competition #4.

Blood of the Family Tree

But what *did* stand out were the animated pieces - the *Blood of the Family Tree* was an interesting approach to examining a family through literal bloodlines, down to the molecules themselves. *Of Wood*, by Owen Klatte of Milwaukee, captured my unblinking attention with its immaculate stop-motion, continuous carving on a single 18 inch diameter chunk of wood. It took Mr. Klatte *five years* to create, but the images belie any break in the process. It was his first independent animation since his college years, between which times he worked on *Nightmare Before Christmas, Dinosaur, James and the Giant Peach (and many others),* when not teaching Stop Motion, Animation Business, and a course on Animation Production Processes, at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He created this tour-de-force with little storyboarding, choosing to go where the woodgrain took him. It took the Best Experimental Animation award, and whoa, did it deserve the honor.

Of Wood - of course!

Gary Schwartz's Corner - Recipes and IFFY

April 19 - 22, IFFY

This year, IFFY (Independent Film Festival - Ypsilanti) returned in person to Ypsi's Riverside Arts Center. The 2023 festival featured a special celebration of short films fresh from the Mitten (and Ohio) region, multiple shorts programs by local film and arts enthusiasts, the return of popular live listening event Radio Campfire with a heartfelt listening program of "Movies for Your Ears," and in-person creative workshops that aimed to help hone the rising film making talent in our community (guess who worked on one of those!).

The IFFY signal film by Gary Schwartz is online! Oh that technology!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_KjaSpqmsk

Gary's PESTO recipe (from a Coffee Break discussion)

2 cups fresh basil leaves, packed
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 2 ounces)
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil (is it polite to ask?)

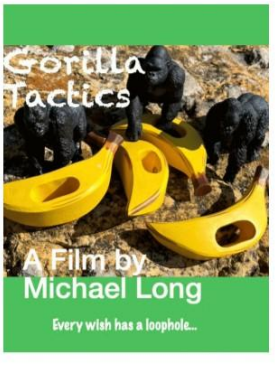
1/3 cup pine nuts
3 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 tablespoon), more or less to preference
1/4 teaspoon salt, or more to taste
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste

Mince basil and pine nuts, add the garlic and Parmesan, mince some more, then slowly add the olive oil, then season with salt and pepper to taste. Schmear on crackers, chicken, anything. Presto! It's pesto'd!

Many IFFY ways to create a film

Wrapping Up Productions

Gorilla Tactics (Michael Long) :: *Home* (Jim Schaub-Jim Middleton)



Gorilla Tactics, a sweet stream of contemplation on a childhood dream of a gorilla suit, will soon have the name of Michael Long returning to festival screens. Attendees of Michael's monthly coffee breaks have had the opportunity to watch his film evolve over the past year. Like all personal projects, it is a journey of discovery both in process and the need to bring a bit of joyful closure to youthful aspirations.

Home, interrupted in production by the pandemic, has a scheduled premiere in Muskegon for its production team on May 21st, after which it likely will have a few last-minute changes before its release to the festival circuit. It is a feature-length documentary on the teenage years of Buster Keaton and his family at their summer cottages at Bluffton, on Lake Michigan, near Muskegon. Combining rare footage, photos, and interviews of contemporaries (including Carl Reiner) who crossed paths with "the Great Stone Face," it describes a little-examined period in Keaton's life. Jim Schaub coordinated the narrative arc on *Home*, and Jim Middleton provided animated sequences, illustrating Keaton's elaborate practical jokes on fellow vaudevillians and townspeople.

NEWSFLASH - NEWSFLASH - NEWSFLASH
NEWSFLASH - NEWSFLASH - NEWSFLASH
The box office for the Ottawa International Animation Festival will be live on May 29th, and as promised, they're happy to extend an association discount to ASIFA Central members. Logos, posters, and links to OIAF social media accounts can be found at: https://www.animationfestival.ca/

PD Music Excavations - *Looking for instant musical partners? The "Accompany-U-Recordings" of the 1930s are going digital!*

In the late 1930s, a now-long defunct vanity recording company known as J. J. Warner of San Francisco decided what the musical consumers really, *really* needed at the close of the great depression was a series of "Accompany-U-Recordings" for traveling violinists in need of piano accompaniment. A set of records was produced featuring only the piano portions of traditional classical duet pieces. Pianist Marie Coppin performed solo under the mute guidance of violinist and tutor Louis Debovsky. The fascinating results were half of a duet for Saint-Saens' *The Swan,* variations on *Rondo* by Beethoven, Schubert's *Ave Maria*, and many other standards, on 78rpm recordings. The archivist at The Animating Apothecary (yr hmbl typst is being cute) is busy running these three-minute classics through RIAA filters to add to the perpetually growing public domain collection on *archive.org*, with a complete listing of PD music and pre-1923 recordings listed at *asifa.org* under the newsletter tab at the home page. Enjoy! (Or not. But it's FREE!)

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) May, 2023, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

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and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini meatloaf, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where shooting on twos is considered a vacation..

FLASHBACK: Thinking of the 2023 ANNIES

from Chuck Wilson (February 2023 blog entry, at https://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com/)

Well, this year represented the 50th anniversary of ASIFA Hollywood's Annie Awards, and with that comes my ramblings on the always-entertaining awards ceremony.

Opening the 50th program was Tom Kenny, the voice of Spongebob Squarepants.

Hrm, don't recall seeing *Ice Merchants*. Looks to be worth a look. Fortunately, it's on the *New Yorker's* YouTube channel (https://youtu.be/mhj74ZjfaQ8).

Best Special Production: *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse*. I just love the visual style of this film. Can't wait to watch it.

June Foray Award goes to animation historian Mindy Johnson and is well deserved!

I'm reminded of the fact that I need to watch Phil Tippett's *Mad God*.

Best Character Design in TV/Media goes to Blur Studio's Alberto Mieglo for the Jibaro episode of *Love Death + Robots!* What an awesome win for an incredible episode of animated film.

Best Character Animation in TV/Media goes to Tim Watts for *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse.*

Another great win for *Love, Death + Robots*: Animated Effects in an Animated TV/Media Production for the Bad Traveling episode.

Editing in an Animated TV/Media Production, another win for *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse*. This film is having a really good night!

Was very touching to see Evelyn Lambart posthumously receive the Winsor McCay award. I really loved seeing the montage of films, photos, and interviews featuring Evelyn. It's always a treat to see her work shown to a larger audience.

Was even more touching to see how ASIFA Hollywood brought out Lauren Faust to present the Winsor McCay award to her husband Craig McCracken.

Hrm. So they bring in Bob Iger to present Pete Docter's Winsor McCay award. And when they do the montage for Pete Docter's career, they blank out the video that's being streamed to online audiences "Due to copyright and clearance issues." Oooookay.

Another win for *Love, Death Robots*: Andrew Kevin Walker won Best Writing/ TV/Media for the Bad Traveling episode.

They produced a stop-mo segment for when the Tiny Chef Show won Best Animated TV Production for Preschool Children--with the Tiny Chef presenting the congratulatory speech. That was pretty clever.

Really like how they've added the 'Best Animated TV/Media Production, Limited Series' category. That was a really classy decision--to shine light on some shows that would otherwise be overlooked.

Not sure if Guillermo del Toro ad-libbed some of his lines but he sure was funny.

Love, Death + Robots is having a great night as Emily Dean won the award for Storyboarding in an Animated Televison/Media Production for the Very Pulse of the Machine episode.

Another win for *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, this time Directing in an Animated television/Media Production. Now I really can't wait to watch this film.

I bump *My Father's Dragon* up on the list of features I want to watch.

A very gracious and humbling yet energetic speech from Guillermo del Toro when he won the Annie for Directing in an Animated Feature Production for *Pinocchio.*

Am a little embarrassed that I haven't seen any of the entries in the Best Indie Feature category.

And Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* wins the Best Animated Feature. I quickly log on Netflix to add it to my queue.

Congratulations to all the winners and the nominees.

HELP! I LOVE WATCHING ANIMATED SHORTS by Karl Cohen

Part One of a Three-Part Series Providing an Overview of Impressions by a Grand Master of the Animation Community

US Animation in the 1960s and '70s

Some of animations' most exciting moments are when you discover an inventive animated short that amazes you in some way. In the 1960s the age of well-made Hollywood 35mm theatrical cartoons for families came to an end, only a few animated features were being made, and an industry was just getting started to make limited animation shows for kids.

What was exciting for a lot of people was the blossoming 16mm film industry that was producing well-made animated TV ads, non-theatrical animated shorts for schools and industry and there were individuals creating impressive experimental personal films. There were also several non-theatrical 16mm distributors who were rented and selling films to schools, libraries, art museums and other groups.

In the 1960s and '70s corporations and our government were funding a good number of those animated, educational shorts as well as live action films. One of the most innovative and accessible films is the part-animated *Why Man Creates* (1968) by Saul Bass, that discusses the nature of creativity (it was produced by the Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Company). It won the Oscar for Best Documentary Short Subject.

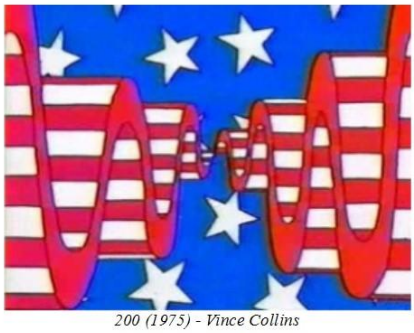
Another wonderful work is *Lapis*(1966) by James Whitney. It is a meditative computer generated film composed of mandalas changing in time to a soundtrack of a magnificent Indian raga played by Ravi Shankar.

A growing number of individuals were discovering that creating animation on 16mm film was not only possible, but there was an audience and small market for this exciting form of art. In some cases, government agencies purchased prints to show the world that, in our democracy, Uncle Sam supported works ranged from traditional looking films to amazing experimental art such as Frank and Caroline Mouris' *Frank Film* (1973).

Frank Film (1973) - Frank and Caroline Mouris

Karl Cohen is the editor of the meatiest newsletter about animation on the planet and author of *Forbidden Animation* and many articles on many platforms - an appreciative examination of his life and times is at https://cinesourcemagazine.com/index.php?/site/comments/the_cartoon_king
Mr. Cohen is also seeking feedback and questions about this series of essays and can be reached at https://www.karlcohen@earthlink.net

Prints of this animated collage comprising thousands of images were purchased by the US Information Agency [USIA] to be shown abroad. The whimsical mixed media film *Time Piece* (1965) by Jim Henson received similar attention.



200 (1975) - Vince Collins

In San Francisco, Scott Bartlett, Jordan Belson and others were using animation to develop new ways to express the personal feelings created when one uses psychedelics and/or meditation. They were creating works that expressed new kinds of aesthetic experiences, often using new emerging technology.

Vince Collins created mind blowing psychedelic animation. He won a Student Academy Award for his short *Euphoria* (1975), and the same year his proposal for a USIA grant was accepted. Later in 1975, a "far out" burst of energy was shown on screens around the world.

The film he created with that grant was *200*, an experimental way to celebrate the 200th anniversary of our nation. Vince may not have known it, but the government was using the films they sponsored as positive Cold War propaganda. It was intended to show, that in our country. we supported artistic freedom, while behind the Iron Curtain the state had the right to approve, censor and ban art.

An Ugly Example of Cold War Censorship

An ugly example of censorship from behind the Iron Curtain happened after Czechoslovakian Jan Svankmejer won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival and the Grand Prix at Annecy for his film *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1983). He was living in a Soviet controlled nation, and unfortunately the unimaginative Czech bureaucrats, alarmed that an artist they didn't know was representing, at least in their minds, their country. Who was this strange surrealist and what did the I Im mean? They banned him from making any further films as his surreal work wasn't nice Czech propaganda that glorified the state. They saw his work as an embarrassment to the country.

Svankmejer's next film project was *Alice* (1988) his first feature. It was produced using money provided by

Channel 4 in the UK, just as the Czech government was about to fall. Since the government was about to collapse and he wasn't using the state's money, they left him alone.

Reagan Downsizes Govt. Spending by Cutting Budgets that Support the Arts

Oct. 1, 1981: That Day Is Finally Here -- Reagan's Budget Cuts Begin

By Thomas B. Edsall and Washington Post Staff Writer; October 1, 1981

Today, the first day of the government's new year, the Reagan administration's budget cuts begin to slice the edge off a vast network of domestic spending programs.

Oct. 1--the effective date for most of the $35 billion in cuts--marks the reversal, at least temporarily, of two great waves of government intervention, the New Deal and the Great Society.

The exciting period of rich experimentation by independent filmmakers (c.1960 -'70s) is mostly forgotten today. What most Americans would soon became familiar with is animation for features and TV.

The first major change occurred almost overnight with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Once Reagan's appointees were in office, massive budget cuts were made to many Federal agencies, including the Department of Education, The National Endowment for the Arts. They slashed the budget for most forms of art. Funding for animation vanished and unfortunately that situation hasn't improved. The once thriving market for non-theatrical films for educational films quickly dried up. The lack of new films and the budget cuts for public schools to buy teaching materials were factors that contributed to non-theatrical film distributors going out of business. Some of these distributors were distributing experimental, inspirational and entertaining animation as well as educational films.

Animated Shorts for Teens and Adults

When I was about twelve, I discovered there was more to animation than the great Looney Tunes that I loved. The first of several epiphanies was my discovering the films of Norman McLaren from Canada. I had no idea such wonderful films existed until my father took me to a large party where they showed McLaren's *Neighbors* (1952) and two of his abstract films drawn directly on film stock.

Neighbors (1952) - Norman McLaren

A few years later I had my first exposure to the delightful, quirky animation from Zagreb, and then Jiri Trinka's *The Hand* (1965, Czechoslovakia) that contained sly political content. Then in the early 1970s I joined thousands of other people who discovered incredible films in the annual *Tournée of Animation* programs. The compilations introduced styles and concepts from around the world that helped some Americans realize there were amazing alternatives to Hollywood cartoons.

When universities began to offer courses in animation, students discovered that they could learn the techniques needed to make their own meaningful works. Also a few colleges were beginning to hold film festivals that encouraged students to make works that they can submit to festivals. When I was working at the Toledo Museum of Art (1968 – 1971) I was able to attend several screenings at the Ann Arbor Film Festival which included experimental animation. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in LA established the Student Academy Awards in 1972. It gives film students an impressive competition to enter and there is an animation category. This contest, with many others, helped (and continues to help) open doors that can advance the careers of young animators. It also gives film distributors a chance to find out about works they might want to represent.

Being in the Student Academy Awards gives the film world a chance to discover tomorrow's hot talent.

A few of the outstanding films they have honored are *Lady and the Lamp*, (1979) and *Nightmare* (1980), both by John Lasseter. He is still the only student to win Student Oscars in Animation two years in a row!

Henry Selick's films, *Tube Tales* (1975) and *Phases* (1979), were finalists, and Pete Docter's *Next Door* won the Student Academy Award in Animation in 1990.

Lasseter, Selick, and Docter were graduates from CALArts, a school that obviously had both a great faculty and top students.

The Rise and Decline of Animated Shorts Programming

While getting a film shown in a festival is an important accomplishment, getting it into a touring film program is an even greater honor. The first program of independent animated shorts from Europe in the US was in 1964 when Pierre Barbin, the director of the Festival D'Annecy (founded in 1960), was invited to visit the United States. Animation producer Les Goldman and UCLA Professor Bill Shull, with the help of the State Department, arranged for the visit. Annecy was at that time the only festival devoted to showing animation, but since not everyone could go there, why not get some of the film and show them in LA?

Barbin brought a program of films from the 1963 Annecy festival. The LA screenings were an important introduction to the animation community of an exciting vibrant form of animation that was being created in other parts of the world. The rumors were true that while the US was turning out mindless stuff made for kids TV, in Europe an exciting new form of animation was developing for adults.

The following year, animator John Wilson produced a similar screening at the Huntington Hartford Theater (later called the Doolittle Theater) in Hollywood. Former MGM animator Bill Littlejohn recalled, "It opened our eyes to the fact that these things are marketable, that there was an audience for this type of thing."

The success of the screenings resulted in Bill Littlejohn and Les Goldman, both members of ASIFA-Hollywood (then called ASIFA-West), asking Henry Hopkins, a curator at the newly opened LA County Museum, about working together to present their own event. Ward Kimball, two-time Oscar winner and one of Walt Disney "nine old men," pitched in to help create the

upcoming event that took place at the museum in 1967. That screening is considered to be the birth of *The International Tournee of Animation*, an important showcase in the US for international contemporary animated films (knowledge of how this event came about was forgotten until I recently found a copy of "The Tournee at 20" by Jon Hofferman, an unpublished manuscript that Prescott Wright had given me just before he died.)

Those were the first chances for a lot of people to actually see quality animation for adults that they had read about. These films were not being shown anywhere else in the US. The ASIFA members who were active in making these screenings happen included June Foray, Bill Scott, Bill Littlejohn, David Hilberman, Ward Kimball and Les Goldman.

The second *Tournée*, 1968, was an even greater success thanks to Herb Kosower, who taught at the University of Southern California (USC). He organized and ran the second, third and fourth shows.

As word of the showings spread, out of town screening were requested. The first was at San Francisco State. David Hilberman, a former Disney animator and a founder of the UPA cartoon studio was teaching there.

As more requests were made, ASIFA-Hollywood realized they needed a dedicated manager to organize and run the *Tournée* as a business. They chose Prescott Wright, a former fellow at the American Film Institute (AFI), who had just started his own film distribution company in San Francisco. Wright was hired in 1970 to organize and distribute the *Tournée*. One his first screenings was at the San Francisco Museum of Art. Each year the shows were gaining in popularity, but in 1973 the LA County Museum dropped financial support for the production of the show. Wright had to assume that responsibility and one of the first changes he made was to commission a different animation student each year to create the show's opening title sequence.

In 1974, Wright wrote about the unique qualities of the films he was showcasing. He first explained that while the US had created an exceptional theatrical cartoon industry, "in Europe the animated film took a little different route. It was not intended primarily to please young audiences or simply to get people seated for a feature film, but rather, the animated film was considered a medium of more serious expression intended primarily for adults. Few of these short films dealing with human foibles, politics, and humor in ironic and often wry ways were seen in the US until the mid-fifties and then as 'educational' films blending messages with very sophisticated art work. They were little noticed until 1962 when a film from Zagreb called *Ersatz* won an Academy award." (Published in *Magic Lantern*, Vol. III, Number II, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, 1974)

In 1975 the *Tournée* was screened in 30 locations around the country, but the revenue it produced wasn't sufficient. About that time Gary Meyer, who had been a classmate and fellow teacher with Wright at SF State, was now co-owner of the Landmark theatre chain. Gary says he convinced Wright to let him premiere the show in LA at the NuArt and to let him show the annual programs in the chain's other theaters. Wright resisted the idea but he gave in. That resulted in the show playing to a much wider audience. The 16th program played in 120 locations.

Wright ended up directing the program for about 15 years. He attended festivals in the US and Europe (Annecy, Zagreb and others) to find works to show in his *Tournée*. In 1975, he was also a founding member – and guiding light – of the ASIFA chapter in San Francisco. In 1976, he was a founder of the Ottawa International Animation Festival. He acted as their first International Director.

In 1977, an exceptional program of animated shorts was screened on public television, the *International Festival of Animation*. It was hosted by British actress Jean Marsh. It gave a much wider audience a chance to see an impressive selection of films including *Closed Mondays* (1974) by Will Vinton and Bob Gardiner, the early computer animation *Hunger* (also 1974, a good year for genres) by Peter Foldes, and other important works. Unfortunately, despite favorable press, there wasn't a second season for the series.

In 1977, *The Fantastic Animation Festival* premiered with an excellent selection of films. It was even made available as a package to TV. They had an unusual looking poster to promote this fine show, but unfortunately, like the PBS series, there wasn't a second edition.

The Fantastic Animation Festival did result in something important: the two guys who had been hired to hand out flyers promoting the show figured out they could organize and promote one of their own. Mike Gribble and Craig "Spike" Decker were soon in business showing the *Spike and Mike Festival of Animation*. Spike and Mike became successful showing works from around the world.

Now there were two programs that were being shown around the country.

Spike and Mike's shows were a lot of fun if you liked being at an enormous crazy party or a rock concert where the host builds up the crowd's anticipation for something special. While the films were the main act, before the program, Spike got the audience boisterous and loud. Large balloons were tossed into the audience that could be batted about until they popped. Spike's dog even got on stage to pop several. Mike would dress flamboyantly with colorfully patterned suits, colored hair and a beard trimmed in curious ways. One time, half of his face was clean shaven and the other half sported a neatly trimmed beard. Spike loved walking around town handing out their colorful flyers for their show accompanied by several battery powered mechanical animals. They also commissioned artists they liked to do the covers of the show's poster and program. They were delightful showman and were articulate. They loved having fun and audiences joined in and loved it!

Spike and Mike ran their business like P.T. Barnham might have. They would

"four-wall" (rent) the theatre for a fixed price so they could keep 100% of the gate. To avoid complex accounting (ie, paying royalties) they bought prints of films for a flat fee for the life of the print (according to several filmmakers). They relied on their skills as showmen to promote their event which can be a risky way of doing business, but they were experts. They built up a loyal following everywhere they went, so when they came to San Francisco and other cities they often sold out large halls for several nights, They hired students, hippies and other cool dudes to hand out flyer on college campuses and at other places where their perspective audience might hang out.

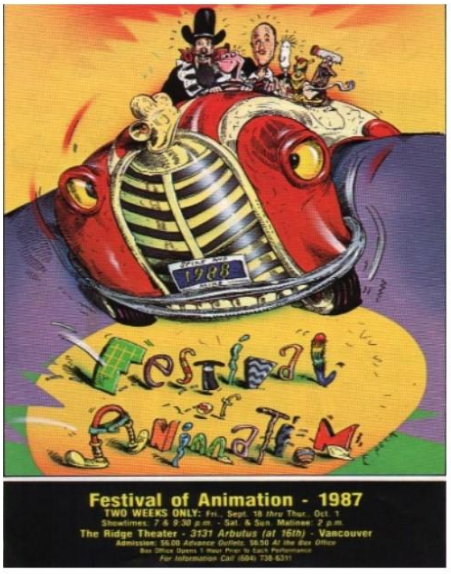
They were also great at inviting special guests to appear on stage and to say a few words to the audience.

When the guest animator was a young John Lasseter, perhaps 100 people and I were invited to a party at their suite of rooms (lots of pizza and stuff to drinks – it wasn't a high-society, catered affair). One time, Spike had to stay at the theatre, so he asked if my wife and I would take June Foray someplace for a really nice for dinner. I have great memories of their coming to town.

The availability of excellent animated shorts to see got even more interesting in 1985 when Expanded Entertainment was organized as a "sister" partner to Landmark Theaters. They distributed both live action features and collections of outstanding animated shorts.[1]

Expanded created the *Animation Celebration*, a program in 35mm that featured an excellent selection of animation. This, and subsequent, editions were shown theatrically in Landmark Theaters and by other exhibitors. The shows received good reviews in the press.

Prescott Wright, who was creating and distributing the *Tournée*, told me his business was shrinking due to the decline of venues showing 16mm films. He also wasn't sure he could afford to blow up and successfully distribute a 35mm Tournee to commercial cinemas. Most non-theatrical animation was made and distributed on 16mm film at that time. In 1986 Prescott decided to sell his business to Expanded Entertainment and accept a job offer to help Bill Dennis, a former Disney Vice President, set up and run a new animation studio in the Philippines. Expanded/Landmark had the finances to create new programs and to blow up films shot in 16mm to 35mm for distribution to commercial movie houses.



The *Tournée* continued as a 35mm program and Ron Diamond programmed the 20th to 24th edition of the *Tournée*. They turned out to be a really fine shows and profitable, but after the 24th it was decided to end the series.

In 1988, Expanded released a cutting edge experimental show that Diamond programed with animators David Ehrlich and George Griffin. *Streams of Consciousness: New American Animation*,featured work by Sally Cruickshank, Marcy Page, Joanna Priestly, and other fine artists unknown to the general public. The *New York Times* gave it a nice review - *Taking an Animated Dip in Psychological Waters.*

Expanded also created something unexpected, novel and important in LA - a biannual animation festival. There were now several successful animation festivals in Europe and ones in Ottawa, Canada and in Hiroshima, Japan, but none here. The first LA Animation Celebration was held in 1985 and it had 200 films. In 1987 there were 400.

Terry Thoren, the event's producer, decided to turn the third edition into a really impressive event: the nation's first major animation festival. The 1989 biannual opened with the world premiere of *Felix the Cat: The Movie,* a production from Hungary. There were more than 850 films from 35 countries vying for over $95,000 in cash prizes (awards were given in 12 categories). They showed surreal classics by Jan Svankmajer who was in attendance (when we were introduced, our conversation was brief: his exact words were, "I do not speak English").

They had a tribute to the late David Hand, who had directed films at Disney before producing his own cartoons in England. They screened the latest computer generated shorts (this was before Pixar's *Toy Story* [1995], by John Lasseter), and lots of other exceptional work, including the best of that era's music videos.

The festival turned out to include 39 events. It honored the great voice actor Mel Blanc. The former Disney animator Art Babbitt was given a screening of the British documentary *Animating Art* about him. (It was wonderful seeing Babbitt in-person, even though he was very frail.) Other honored guests included Don Bluth (USA/Ireland), who screened lots of never-released footage, Yang Ding Xien, director of the Shanghai Animation Studio; Feodor Khitruk, president of the Union of Soviet Animators; and John Coates, president of TVC in London (they created *Yellow Submarine*). Coates won the festival's Best Feature award for *When the Wind Blows* (1986). Another honored guest was Doug MacDonald, executive producer, English Language Animation, National Film Board of Canada.

Terry Thoren, the festival's producer, told the press, "We believe that the animation industry in America needs a festival that focuses on its concerns. The foreign festivals like Annecy, have a flavor of really being for Europeans. Ours has developed more of a Western feel."

At last, the US had a serious animation festival that showed lots of great films and members of the animation community came from several parts of the world to be part of it.

Unfortunately this wonderful

[1] Landmark Theaters Corporation was owned by Steve Gilula and Gary Myers with former Landmark theater manager and marketing head Terry Thoren as president of Expanded. Meyer and Gilula were Executive Producers and quite involved in running the corporation. Ron Diamond was hired to oversee the content and distribution of the animated programs.

event was so expensive to produce that subsequent events were continually downsized before it ended completely in the early 1990s

Expanded continued to explore new directions in programming. It created the controversial program *Outrageous Animation* in 1988, billing it as "the wildest cartoons ever." Critics gave it mixed reviews and said it didn't really live up to its name. It did however, delight the audience at the LA Animation Celebration in 1989, featuring *Lupo the Butcher* (Canada, 1987) by Danny Antonucci. Lupo hacks his body apart, first by accident, then seemingly out of spite for himself, while simultaneously screaming expletives. Despite the language, *Lupo* was considered tame enough to be shown on the Turner Classic Movies channel uncensored!

Spike and Mike also tried their hand at trying to shock and gross out the audience with their *Sick and Twisted Animation*, in 1990. The quality of most of their films was questionable, but it was something new and exciting for some - and disgusting for others. Sequels were produced and distributed on VHS, giving young animators a chance to create something crude that would actually be seen by thousands of people.

Broadcast TV would eventually expand its boundaries of what defines "acceptable" on TV with *The Simpsons*, starting in 1989, with cable pushing the boundaries further.

The 1992 Nickelodeon premier season of *Ren and Stimpy* in 1992 by John Kricfalusi, was totally outrageous and gross. Unfortunately, it was too extreme for the network, who tamed the show in subsequent seasons.

The internet had even fewer restrictions, so it has hosted extremely gross shows. One long lasting, twisted series was *Happy Tree Friends* by Aubrey Ankrum, Rhode Montijo, and Kenn Navarro, 2000-2016. Its success was tied to creating extremely small files for dial-up modem distribution, later enhanced for early DVD issues.

While Expanded released *Too Outrageous Animation* in 1995, they also released the *British Animation Invasion*, 1993, a very respectable program of sophisti-cated shorts. Critics responded by calling it smart, witty, daring and delightful. One wrote it "genuinely sustains your interest throughout." It was packed with audience pleasers including *Next*, by Barry Purves, 1990, featuring a realistic looking stop-motion puppet of William Shakespeare auditioning for St. Peter, performing his 29 plays in just five minutes using pantomime. Other exceptional works were the classic *Creature Comforts* by Nick Park from 1989, of which that the hard-to-please film critic Charles Solomon (*LA Times*) said, "This hilarious film gets funnier on each successive viewing." The program also included *Body Beautiful* (1991) by Joann Quinn, where a bullied female factory worker triumphs as she puts her sexist male supervisor in his place.

Expanded and Spike and Mike increased the public's awareness of independent animation by producing VHS tapes and laser discs of their shows to sell to the public. Spike and Mike's company *Mellow Manner* produced a video of *The World's Funniest Animation* in 1991, followed by annual releases of their *Festival of Animation* videos. In 1993, they also released the first of what would also become a series, the *Sick and Twisted* tapes. Landmark released a video tape of *Outrageous Animation* in 1990, followed by tapes of *British Animation*, and five different *Animation Celebrations*.

This great period of showing independent animated shorts came to an end in 1998 when the Landmark Theaters were sold to the Samuel Goldwyn Company and Expanded Entertainment vanished. The free internet was expanding rapidly and poorly animated Flash animation was becoming the hot new sensation. Its low resolution would have looked awful blown up on a big theater's screen, but the public seemed to enjoy the often crude animation that was available on your home computer screen.

As for the Spike and Mike productions, Mike died from cancer in 1994. He was just 42. Spike carried on by cutting back on the number of new shows produced and trimming the number of screenings he hosted each year. He commissioned a few low budget shorts and he continued to go to international animation festivals.

To see what a Spike and Mike show was like, Kat Alioshin (who once worked for the duo) has produced and directed *Animation Outlaws*, a delightful documentary feature about Spike and Mike that captures the audience having fun. It also has highly regarded animators talking about the unique festival experience that once existed. The trailer and the entire documentary are online.

In 1999 Ron Diamond's *The Animation Show of Shows* premièred, but for several years it was mainly shown at colleges that taught animation, or at major animation studios, museums and at other places where he hoped the works might inspire and influence animators. Ron also runs Acme Filmworks in LA, creating TV commercials for national brands, animated sequences for features and other projects. It was Ron's love of quality animation that led him to create his traveling show. He has expanded his presentations of it into commercial movie theaters, but unfortunately, when Covid 19 arrived he lost his audience. He is currently reviving the show.

Ron's show always feature some of the year's best animated works. They include significant, highly original, artistic, narrative and experimental shorts. They range from funny to serious intelligent concepts.

He is presently putting together the 25th edition which will feature some of the most outstanding shorts from previous shows.

Since 2007, a number of the films that have been in *The Animation Show of Shows* have also been released by Ron on DVDs at very reasonable prices. Amazon carries sets of them.

Ron also founded the internet's largest and most important animation news and information website, *Animation World Network* (awn.com). It covers both the worlds of fine art and commercial animation. There are lots of feature articles, blogs, job and school listings and other things.

Terry Thoren, while he was working with Expanded Entertainment, founded *Animation Magazine*, a slick trade publication with lots of ads. It primarily focuses on news of domestic commercial features and television shows. You can also find animation news online at *Animation Magazine, Animation Scoop,* and *Cartoon Brew*.

This century has also had a short lived attempt to bring quality animated shorts to the public that was run by well-known animators. The first edition of The Animation Show was released in 2003 by Mike ("Beavis and Butthead") Judge and Don Hertzfeldt. They organized the program to show their work the way they

were meant to be seen, on theater screens. The first package included other films they respected including wacky shorts by Bill Plympton. The program was seen in over 200 theaters plus they released a DVD of it.

The *Animation Show* achieved its goal of getting good works seen properly so they continued to put together really nice shows in 2005, 2007 and 2008. They featured fine work by Georges Schwizgebel from Switzerland, Joanna Quinn from the UK, PES and Bill Plympton from the US, and other works. It was a noble experiment where artists put together their ideal shows for the love of the medium. They didn't try to add "ringers" that might have attracted more people, but were not films they respected. Each year the public does get to see in movie theaters a program of the five Oscar nominated animated shorts. It opens a week or two after the nominations are announced and ends before the awards are given. They are shown with the live action nominated works. Five films isn't a good representation of the thousands of animated films made each year, but the brief run is great exposure for the films as the program is seen by several hundred thousand people. (It grosses over three million dollars at the box office.)

The show was originally organized by Carol Crow's Apollo Cinema, but an ill wind blew in and the program is presently distributed by another firm. By the way, only one of the five nominated films this year was by an animator from the US.

I hope this give you a good idea of why it has been so hard to see animated shorts in our country. A Hollywood feature can open on four thousand screens at once, but the shows just discussed were only shown in a limited number of venues. Many of the films are now online, but unless you know what to look for you are unlikely to find them. That results in only a tiny percentage of people knowing that truly remarkable shorts even exist. Part of the reason for that is Hollywood animated features and commercial TV series dominate the news and discussions that include animation. The wonderful independently produced shorts desperately need a home.

TV didn't develop as a showcase for independently produced animated shorts

Until the decline of Hollywood cartoons and animated educational shorts in the classroom, kids were used to seeing animation and they probably took them for granted. As a kid growing up in the 1950s, I knew what to expect before the feature. What I also looked forward to seeing were the special occasions, the two or three hour long cartoon marathons. TV wasn't showing much animation in the early 1950s except silent cartoons with soundtracks added and old public domain cartoons from studios that had gone out of business. I also watched Jay Ward and Alex Anderson's *Crusader Rabbit* (1950), the first limited animation cartoon series that was widely seen. It was a silly novelty.

Animation on TV got more interesting in 1955. Paul Terry sold his company, Terrytoons (Mighty Mouse), to CBS and Warner Bros. sold a package of black and white cartoons to a TV distributor. It included early Daffy Duck and Porky Pig cartoons. In 1957, Walter Lantz premiered the Woody Wood Pecker Show, and in 1960 the Bugs Bunny Show premiered.

Animation made for TV didn't really succeed as a business until Hanna-Barbara entered the TV marketplace with the *Ruff and Reddy Show* in 1957 and Jay Ward returned to TV with *Rocky and His Friends* in 1959.

Ward tried to inject adult humor that would go over the heads of kids, but advertisers stuck with wholesome Hanna-Barbara type shows that were free of adult content.

TV budgets were – and still are – based to some extent on what the sponsors will pay. While production budgets have grown better, TV is still chiefly making low budget animation for kids that runs before and after school and on weekend mornings. Chuck Jones, Hanna-Barbara and a few other producers had slightly larger budgets for the rare prime time/holiday special. TV animation for more mature viewers didn't arrival until *The Simpsons.*

TV animation became a place were advertisers could get reasonable rates for their ads which limited the cost of productions. You probably have fond memories of several shows you enjoyed growing up, but if you are reading this article you know the animation I'm writing about is intended to be seen by an older audience that seeks an alternative experience.

So where's the outlet today for independently produce shorts?

I hope I have clearly shown that it has only been a marginally successful struggle to educate the US public about the value of well-made, intelligent, animated shorts created by independent artists for open-minded adults. Several shows in the past have tried and, but while they did make a positive impression about the value of independent animation as a fine art, only Ron Diamond's *Animation Show of Shows* and the traveling shows of Oscar Nominated Shorts exist today.

The only other outlets in the US today that show independently produced animation are film festivals, and the labyrinth of *FilmFreeway* offers limited genuine opportunities for large-audience exposure.

Sure, five animated shorts are in the annual theatrical release of the Oscar nominated shorts and there is an occasional animated short on PBS, but that is a drop in a very big bucket. It is nice that Pixar and Disney put shorts by their up and coming directors in front of their features, but there are too many good shorts that never get the exposure they deserve.

Unfortunately our nation's best-known independent artists, including Bill Plympton, Signe Baumane, Nina Paley, and others don't have big budgets to promote their work.

As I write this, Signe has a new feature, *My Love Affair with Marriage,* winning festival awards. It is also being distributed theatrically in several European nations. Signe says that securing a theatrical release in North America has been a challenge that she hasn't solved yet. She says that due to the growth of streaming services and the pandemic, the habits of movie goers have been changing and that the changes have resulted in more movie theaters closing. She says "the art-film distribution structures in the U.S. are in the process of collapsing. The offers we have received so far from US distributors have only been for online options."

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This is the first of three essays by Karl Cohen. The second and third will appear in conjunction with our ASIFA Central newsletter in July.

- Yr Hmbl Typst

ASIFA Central JULY 2023

"Make no mistake, we are part of film history, even if it's not entirely noticed yet." – *Sally Cruikshank*

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Briana Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Slightly Less Perplexed Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

Julie Goldstein's GRAM Exhibition

Virtual Memory, film by Julie Goldstein

The Hunting Gallery at the Grand Rapids Art Museum hosted an evocative blend of history and poetry during May and June, created by ASIFA Central President, Julie Goldstein. *Virtual Memory* is a meditation on image-making and its impact on human consciousness, from the physical process of photography and film, to the alternate universes created by computers and virtual reality.

Filmmaker Julie Goldstein traces the legacy and history of the predominant mediums of the last century – like photography, filmmaking, and the radio – and embraces the freedom offered by the immaterial digital sphere. In *Virtual Memory,* Goldstein presents a vision for a future society that welcomes technological advancement in the name of learning and self-expression. At once a critique and celebration of human interactivity with modern devices, Goldstein offers a reassessment of how the sense of self and our communication with others is dependent on the tools we use while also pondering the increasingly intangible nature of our lives. A farewell to the analog, Goldstein envisages the next phase of humanity as one that expands how people's experience of their lives is mediated by digital interfaces.
In addition to her involvement with ASIFA, Ms. Goldstein is Assistant Professor at Grand Valley State University, instructing film culture, animation, and new media within the Department of Visual and Media Arts – *and* is a faculty fellow at the GVSU Applied Computing Institute. She was formerly the Academic Director of Media at the Art Institute of Colorado, where she spearheaded the Game Art and Design program. She has produced and directed numerous animated projects, ranging from a feature length children's character animation to 3D visualizations for the Grand Rapids Ballet. As if that isn't amazing enough, Ms. Goldstein is currently Creative Director for GVSU's Project *Grand Path*, one of the Presidential Initiatives associated with the "Reach Higher: 2025" campaign.

Deanna Morse, AWG Projects and ASIFA International Updates

Children in 11 different countries worked with ASIFA Members who are master-teacher animators, using a wide variety of techniques, to create animations around the theme of solutions to climate change.

The Animation Workshop Group was founded in 1971 as a group of artist teachers who believe that children can use animation to tell their own stories. Each year, all over the world, students create short films based on a common theme, with a variety of viewpoints, multiple techniques, and rich soundtracks.

Nearly 200 students participated in the project, along with over 30 Λ

Deanna Morse (con't)

instructors, support staff and musicians from Greece, France, USA, Croatia, Russia, Austria, Israel, Belgium, Ukraine, Norway, and the rainforest in Brazil. The half hour film was compiled and edited by AWG President Christel Degros of Belgium.

"We All Dream of a SUSTAINABLE Future" is on the AWG Youtube Channel
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0wYUe8kHaA

Deanna Continues: ASIFA International Updates

(slightly edited for space and continuity)

It is not quite six months from my last President message. And we are getting ready to connect at two upcoming partner festivals – Zagreb and Annecy. More than 20 board representatives will be at the two events.

A Review of 2023 Activities

In late December, we were dealing with the Stolen Film drama, and what a drama it was. Although has quieted, it is still an issue for us animators. ASIFA was helpful, we were supportive. But it is the age of AI, copyright issues, and easily downloadable files, this issue will not go away.

We have been working on our communication strategies – how to be transparent without too much email clutter.

For ASIFA, in 2023, we approved the proposed budget...past President Nelson Shin volunteered to do an internal audit, something that ... will keep us legal.

AWG completed a sophisticated film on *Sustainability* (also noted above). With a variety of techniques, nearly 200 students in 11 countries participated, including both Ukraine and Russia. I think it is one of the best AWG films, and am proud to be a participant. If you know of festivals or places that might screen it, please advise.

IAD unveiled the fabulous poster by Georges Schwizgebel. Chapters can share animations through the Film Freeway portal, for the October 28 celebration. Briana is solidly organizing, as usual.

The 2023 ASIFA Prize will be presented at Ottawa (this) fall.

We are in discussion on how to invest part of the money we have in our financial reserve. Several chapters have suggested ideas, including ASIFA Student Awards, a project piloted during the 60th Anniversary.

We are welcoming new chapter representatives, chapters are paying dues, and, of course, there is lots of energy around the back-to-back top notch European festivals. This comes directly after Xiamen, where several ASIFA board members met in person, this year, and felt connected to our global community. We are looking forward to the fall festivals – Ottawa, Espinho, and others… We are working on updating our festival policies.

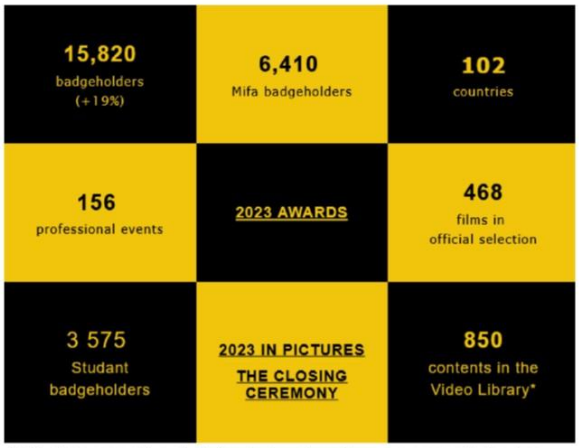
One of my personal goals is to encourage entry points for upcoming leaders. If you want to know more about ASIFA, but are not in the loop, please let me know. One of my mandates is to enable new folks to find ways to plug into our leadership team.

I am trying to develop a solid calendar so that we do not miss deadlines for our annual ASIFA activities.

ASIFA.net is constantly being updated. Be sure and log in for new information, and thank you to our communication team. I look forward to seeing you, or hearing from you, and to continuing our journey to strengthen ASIFA, our international animation association, now 63 years old. Or, 63 years young. Going strong.

Join me, as we celebrate our love of together, around the globe.

morsed@gvsu.edu -
president@asifa.net



** 665 of them are still available for viewing, depending on your accreditation type, until 31st December 2023*

Annecy 2023 was also:

- 345 screenings (WIP and conferences not included)
- Between 4,000 to 8,000 spectators every evening for the open-air screenings on Le Pâquier
- 1,205 Pass grand public
- Le Campus, the brand-new area at the Mifa for students and emerging talent, was a roaring success

OIAF Discounted Festival Passes Available for ASIFA Central Members

Ottawa has been provided with the active membership list as of June 1, 2023 for a discount on passes to this fall's OIAF. Yes, Ottawa, the entire city, the destination of destinies, the locus for ketchup chips and poutine, of carved pumpkins and nicely niched nuggets of nonchalant creativity. *That* Ottawa. However, the OIAF portion of Ottawa is the focus for this discount. Your ASIFA Central membership card, while always an attractive accessory to

Public Service Announcement: *The Ottawa International Animation Festival will take place September 20 – 24, 2023. Attendance is strongly recommended.*

your travel plans, will not necessarily get you a discount for the afore-mentioned ketchup chips, but may get you special attention at customs by ***OIAF (con't)***
officers who think you might know Seth MacFarlane or would like to hear an impromptu rendition of "Tomorrow" while scanning you for contraband (both experiences of yr hmbl typst).

Oh, what is that secret code to provide you with this bounty of overdue recognition? The magic entry, whose entered presence will give this discount? It is - *ASIFACentralOIAF2023* - but remember, it will be double checked against ***the list*** at OIAF and yr humbl typst will get a telegram seeking confirmation (Edmore, being Edmore, has been slow to embrace technology, but the lad who delivers the telegram is quick to embrace a tip).

This poor sap didn't use his discount code for the OIAF '23!

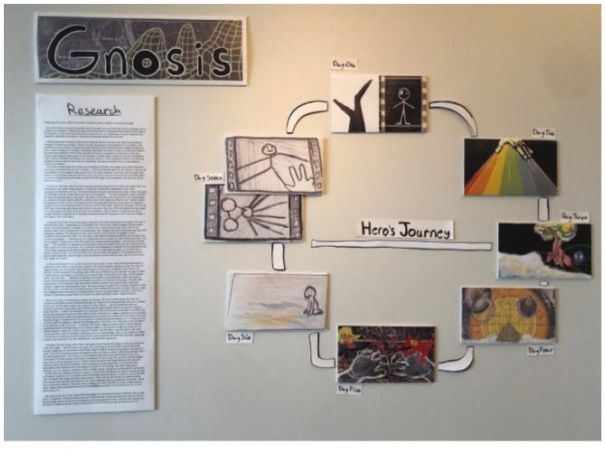
So don't be naughty! Save it for the storyboards!

If you haven't made plans for September 20-24, 2023, contact Adam Tremblay at this secret email access (ok, it's not secret) - *registration@animationfestival.ca*

And Speaking of Membership, Welcome This New Member - Peaches Wilczak - Recent CMU Grad

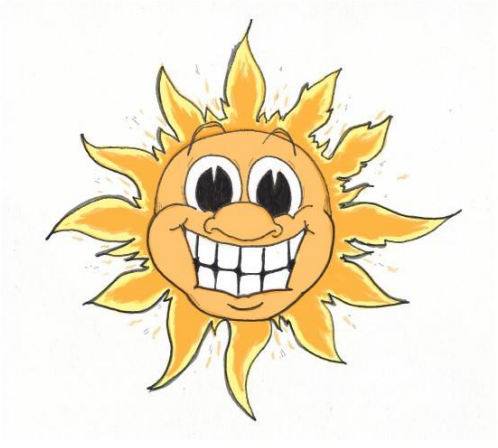
In the thesis film *Gnosis*, Peaches Wilczak professes, "If *Gnosis* is the awareness of universal truth, and the universe is art, then my *Gnosis* is the knowledge that for all the time and energy I put into shaping pieces of the world into art, it equally has the ability to shape me as well. *Gnosis* is knowing that your art loves you, just as much as you love it." Peaches trained at CMU under the guidance of ASIFA Central member and dapper dresser Stephen Leeper.

Peaches Wilczak, animator, with the storyboard to prove it!



Portions of Peaches' earlier exercises appeared in last year's ASIFA Central/CMU IAD reel, and *Gnosis* is set for inclusion in this October's compilation. The film is broken into seven philosophically structured days and its hero's journey can be viewed in its entirety at -

https://peacheswilczak.art/pages/gnosis

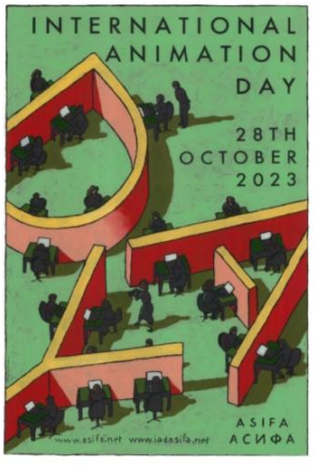


Membership Renewal Process

Those members set for renewal through June of this year should have, by now, received an invitation to re-enlist with ASIFA Central. Students get a discount and may appeal even that to assure a proper diet of ramen and rice paper (also useful for drawing!) while maintaining membership. Renewed members should have received an updated membership card good for a year. If you haven't received yours, drop the membership coordinator a note and we'll fire up the linotype and get things updated!

IAD Approacheth

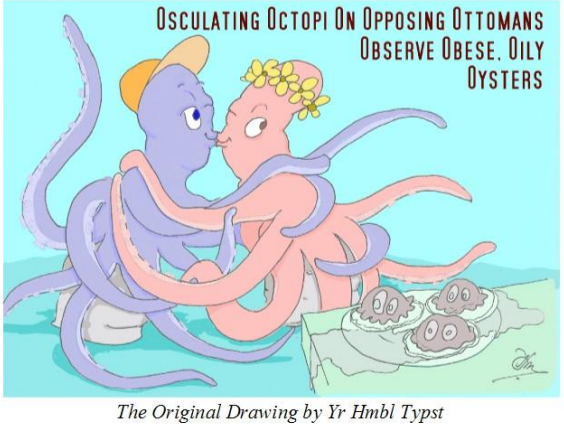
FilmFreeway will remain the designated and preferred broker for the films provided for inclusion, so feel free to upload. Specifics will follow the basic formats from the last two years, with instruction and submission guidelines coming soon in a newsletter near you!



Late Breaking News - more from Deanna!

Just received word that Nelson Shin was accepted to the Academy - AMPAS. I am excited, as I nominated him with the support of Steve Segal. I am proud of the production of his animated feature film, *Empress Chung*, which he made in North Korea and South Korea. *And he did the original Light Saber animation!* ***And***, he was President of ASIFA International. And now he is in the Academy. Well deserved!

Pen and AI Challenge - Osculating Octopi



The Original Drawing by Yr Hmbl Typst

And requesting the same from an AI generator with the tongue-twister input - after several re-iterations, Night Café produced this:

OK, the lighting is better, but I couldn't make it give me oysters.

SAS and Unassigned Seating Department

Yr hmbl typst was late to the SAS gathering celebrating the life and achievements of Howard Beckerman on June 15, and with the random nature of Zoom, wound up in a virtual chair next to Tom Sito and John Canemaker. ASIFA Central member Orrin Scott was actually in attendance, and he brought the receipts:

Public Domain Corner

This June's ANNY program included the earliest soundtrack ever recorded within the short film, *What is Design,* by Mark Franz.

Interesting as the combination was, it also set off a flurry of questions about ownership of recorded sound and performances (in the skewed mindscape of *Yr Hmbl Typst*, anyway).

First, about the film, from its website - "*What is Design?* explores the aspects of Form, Structure, and Movement through cutout style animation derived from imagery from *The Last Whole Earth Catalog* (1971-75).

"The cutout technique and style of *What is Design?* draws inspiration from such work as Harry Smith's *Heaven and Earth Magic* (1962).

"In keeping with the exploratory scientific feel of aspects of the catalog, all of the

individual frames in the film were captured with a digital microscope. This technique was also chosen in order to preserve the textures and details of the original printed material.

First sound film, first artist-director-performer "auteur" film, first film musical, and possibly first gender-bender film experience

"The soundtrack is based on audio from the Dickson Experimental Sound Film (1894), chosen by Franz for the sonic textures of the earliest recording medium."

Second, *The Whole Earth Catalog* is a prized artifact in the archives at The Animating Apothecary. "I cured my warts with voo-doo and a Swiss Army knife" and other essays helped *yr hmbl typst* survive the 70s.

Third, and this is where copyright questions start percolating, the violin extract is the song, "The Cabin Boy," from the light opera *The Chimes of Normandy*, composed in 1877 by Robert Planquette. That takes the composition over the 95 year time limit, and the recording, while originally from an 1894 performance, would be under any normal circumstance within the public domain (past the 100 year time frame for performances).

HOWEVER, it was pieced together from its broken wax cylinder components, digitized *and then publicly paired and presented for the first time in 2002* (while the separate components had existed for some time, Edison could never get the two to synchronize properly). Further complicating the process is that this production was assembled by restoration expert Walter Murch under contract from the Library of Congress, with some input from ILM. So many hands, from public to private!

The question that can emerge - does this 40 second bit of sound copyright get set in 1894, where it was never publicly performed, or in 2002, when it was finally repaired and re-assembled for an actual presentation, and if it's in 2002, is it owned by Mr. Murch, ILM, the Edison Labs, or the Library of Congress (who currently curates the Edison recorded archives, but is extremely vague about their copyright status).

It is doubtful that anyone would ever litigate ownership of this rendition of "The Cabin Boy," but it just shows how some recording copyright performances can get very complicated to sort out. The general consensus now is that Edison recordings are in the public domain, leaving copyright issues to those compositions written between 1923 and 1929, when Edison personally pulled the plug on his recording division.

The Dickson film, representing about a million "firsts" is available at - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4iDmA1seBk (It gets played twice)
What is Design can be experienced at: https://markfranz.org/project/whatisdesign

"Home" Premiere in Muskegon

The first director's cut of Jim Schaub's documentary, *Home,* presenting Buster Keaton's teen years in Muskegon had its first semi-public showing May 21. The animated sequences featured the work of ASIFA Central member Jim Middleton. Further trimming and shuffling will continue this summer with a release to the festival circuits expected later this year.

Karl Cohen is the editor of the meatiest newsletter about animation on the planet and author of *Forbidden Animation* and many articles on many platforms - an appreciative examination of his life and times is at https://cinesourcemagazine.com/index.php?/site/comments/the_cartoon_king
Mr. Cohen is also seeking feedback and questions about this series of essays and can be reached at https://www.karlcohen@earthlink.net

Why is the Nature of Animation in Europe Quite Different than Creations from the US?

You may not pay much attention to what animation festivals in Europe are currently showcasing, but it is worth noting that only a few films from hundreds of entries received from the US are being selected for screening. I became curious why prestigious festivals like Annecy 2023 and the Zagreb Animation Festival are featuring only a limited number of US works in their competition programs. In the past, these festivals used to showcase a significant number of entries from the US, as they were considered cutting-edge.

This recognition played a crucial role in advancing the careers of independent US animators. I wanted to investigate why so many US films are now being overlooked abroad. Through my research, I discovered that people attribute this trend to differences in budgets, technical perfection, and content between European and American animation.

My third (upcoming in August in this newsletter) article, "Insights by People from the Animation Community," includes some comments that form the basis of this article. After analyzing what I've learned, I now argue that animation in the US started evolving in different directions from Europe during the second half of the twentieth century. These changes ultimately shaped the type of animation produced by US animators.

A simple way to illustrate this divide is by comparing works made in the US, primarily following what can be called the "Hollywood Formula," with European features. European artists employ approaches that are considerably different.

The Rise of the Hollywood Animated Feature: A Remarkable Business Product

Although you might not be comfortable with this notion, many in the business world view animated features as products. Walt Disney demonstrated from his own experiences that features could be profitable, but they also carried a high risk of financial loss. While *Snow White* (1937) was a great success, along with Disney's films from the 1950s, other films disappointed at the box office. If *The Jungle Book* (1967) hadn't been successful, the studio might have ceased production not taken the risk of producing *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (with a budget of $4 million, *The Jungle Book* grossed $13 million in the US and $23.8 million worldwide).

An uncomfortable revelation that US feature films are not solely created as wonderful expressions of artistic freedom came in 1981 through a statement made by Michael Eisner. At that time, he served as the president of Paramount Pictures (1976 to 1984), before becoming the head of Disney from 1984 to 2005. In 1981, Eisner wrote an infamous internal memo expressing his belief that, "We have no obligation to make history. We have no obligation to make art. We have no obligation to make a statement. To make money is our only objective."

Under Eisner's leadership, a Disney subsidiary called Touchstone produced *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* in 1988, with animation directed by Richard Williams. The film demonstrated that well-written animated features for an older audience could be profitable. This success led Disney to produce *The Little Mermaid* (1989), followed by *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), and *The Lion King* (1994). It marked a highly profitable period known as the "Disney Renaissance" and ushered in a new era of commercially successful animation, attracting other studios to the industry.

In terms of content, most scripts for US animated features follow what is known as the "Hollywood Formula." The story generally opens with an impressive action sequence to captivate the viewer and generate excitement. Then, just enough information is provided about the hero or protagonist to make us admire them and become emotionally invested. The film gradually reveals the problems the antagonist will create. Throughout the plot, the story presents a series of growing and captivating challenges and resolutions. The filmmakers strive for great twists, exciting action sequences, and clever resolutions before reaching the final act. The final act usually begins at a low point and builds toward a grand climax. After the climax, the film concludes with a resolution, sometimes leaving room for a potential sequel if the film performs well at the box office.

When utilizing the Hollywood Formula, it is crucial to set the plot in a fantasy world to ensure viewers don't identify too closely with the film. The inclusion of numerous surprises is encouraged, but controversial elements that could impact box office revenue are typically avoided. The more appealing and glossy

the product appears, the more the audience is expected to love it.

TV shows for adult audiences also adhere to a somewhat standard format – the situation comedy. The first notable series aimed at adult audiences was *The Simpsons* (1987), created by Matt Groening. Each week, viewers of the animated situation comedy are presented with and limited movements. This approach helps lower production costs, as action sequences require more time and money to create. Situation comedies targeted at adult audiences can result in highly profitable series, making them an attractive option for producers, studios, and networks whose primary objective is to make a profit.

The tremendous financial success of films and TV shows created using these basic approaches has led the public to assume that they are witnessing *great animation*. Consequently, many audiences have become complacent with these standardized approaches to animation, often ignoring or rejecting other styles, including those seen in imported features.

Films that deviate too far from the Hollywood Formula run the risk of failure in the US market. For instance, Disney's *Fantasia* (1940) did not break even financially upon its initial release, but it became profitable upon reissues, particularly in the 1960s. *Fantasia 2000* has yet to recoup its costs. Similarly, *Yellow Submarine* (1968), a production by TVC in the UK, also failed to break even at its initial box office. However, King Features paid TVC a fixed price to produce it, and King Features was already profiting from the Beatles' TV series.

The Challenges and Limited Exposure of Non-Hollywood Animated Features in the US

Animated features from Europe and other parts of the world often deviate from the Hollywood Formula, offering unique and visually stunning storytelling experiences. However, these films face challenges in gaining exposure and generating substantial revenue in the US market. Limited promotion, distribution, and a lack of media coverage contribute to their under-performance. Here we can examine the struggles faced by non-Hollywood animated films and highlights notable examples.

The Impact of Marketing and Distribution

Unlike major Hollywood studios, distributors of non-Hollywood animated films often operate on smaller budgets, resulting in limited advertising and promotion. As a result, these films do not receive extensive exposure, particularly in rural America. Consequently, the majority of the US audience remains unaware of these films, or if they are aware, they show little interest due to a lack of information and media coverage.

Examples of Non-Hollywood Animated Features

Tomm Moore, an Irish filmmaker, has produced several visually captivating and charming animated films, such as *Secret of Kells* (2000), *Song of the Sea* (2014), and *Wolfwalkers* (2020). Despite their artistic success, these films grossed modest amounts at the US box office, indicating that only a fraction of the potential audience experienced them.

Another notable example is *The Red Turtle* (2016) by Michaël Dudok de Wit from Holland. Premiering at Cannes and backed by Studio Ghibli in Japan, the film received critical acclaim and an Oscar nomination. However, its US box office earnings were relatively low compared to its global performance, suggesting a limited audience reach in the US.

Anime's Limited Success in the US Market

While anime has a dedicated fan base, it has yet to achieve the same level of financial success as films from major US studios like Disney and Pixar. Only a handful of anime features have grossed more than $30 million at the US box office, with the majority released within the past few years. Despite the popularity of Hayao Miyazaki's films, they often struggle to secure wide theatrical releases throughout the US, limiting their exposure to a broader audience.[1]

The Importance of Media and Theater Bookings

Media outlets play a crucial role in educating the public about the value and diversity of foreign animated features. Unfortunately, many local newspapers and news websites fail to provide adequate coverage or listings for these films, further hindering their visibility.

Additionally, theater bookers may be reluctant to screen foreign films, believing there is insufficient audience demand to justify the costs of running the business. This lack of exposure and distribution contributes to the limited success of non-Hollywood animated features.

Success Stories and Industry Challenges

While non-Hollywood animated films face numerous challenges, a few success stories have emerged. Nick Park's *Chicken Run* (2000), produced in collaboration with DreamWorks and supported by a significant advertising campaign, achieved both critical acclaim and financial success. However, the termination of DreamWorks' partnership with Aardman following the underperformance of *Flushed Away* (2006) highlights the different priorities between artistic vision and financial profitability.

Non-Hollywood animated features offer unique storytelling and artistic experiences that often deviate from the Hollywood Formula. However, their limited exposure, lack of marketing, and distribution challenges hinder their success in the US market. Improved media coverage, increased support from distributors, and a more diverse theater

[1] Studio Ghibli did announce its 2023 film-festival, with all ten of Hayao Miyazaki's films coming to the big screen https://www.comingsoon.net/movies/news/1270802-studio-ghibli-fest-2023-dates

booking approach can help expand the audience for these films, allowing a wider appreciation of their artistic merits.

Divergent Perspectives: US and European Opinions on Animated Films

Over the past few decades, a divide has emerged between US and European producers regarding what constitutes a great animated film. While Hollywood studios have refined their concepts to create billion-dollar releases, European and Middle Eastern films operate on smaller budgets but can still offer visually captivating and compelling content for both adults and children. This article explores the differing opinions of US audiences, anime fans, and international viewers and delves into the factors that shape these perspectives.

US Animation: A Focus on Spectacle and Sequels

In the US, the financing of animated features often involves enormous budgets, which limits the inclination to take major creative risks. Producers tend to believe that pouring more money into production's "bells and whistles" will yield greater profitability. Physical and computer-generated effects, along with renowned actors and composers, are commonly employed to enhance the film's appeal. The prevailing sentiment seems to be a reluctance to risk investments on unknown talents, opting only for what is perceived as the best in terms of talent and resources. Furthermore, directors aim to make the films as entertaining and exciting as possible, often resulting in the creation of numerous sequels that capitalize on established characters and storylines.

European and Middle Eastern Animation: Pragmatic and Thought-Provoking

In contrast, European and Middle Eastern directors approach animation with pragmatism, often working with smaller budgets that limit their access to extensive visual effects. Many of these films target adult audiences and focus on intelligent scripts that resonate with mature viewers. Some films even tackle real-world situations, offering thought-provoking narratives that explore a range of themes. Examples include *Suicide Shop* (2012) by Patrice Leconte from France, a dark comedy inspired by Charles Adams' style, and *Persepolis* (2003) by Marjane Satrapi from Iran, an Oscar-nominated auto-biographical film about growing up in a repressive regime.

The Directors' Intended Messages

When interviewing directors like Marjane Satrapi and Ari Folman, it becomes clear that their films carry specific messages and warnings. Satrapi aimed to shed light on dangerous fanaticism exhibited by political figures, while Folman sought to caution Israeli teens about the consequences of blindly glorifying military service. Despite their intentions, these films often struggle to reach their intended target audiences, with mature adults being the primary viewers instead of the teenagers they hoped to influence.

Divergent Audience Expectations

Research suggests that American and European audience expectations differ significantly. European festival-goers anticipate animated shorts and features catering to adult viewers, including content based on true stories that may not be suitable for children. They do not necessarily seek out films resembling Disney or DreamWorks productions. European audiences look forward to intellectually challenging films, animated documentaries, surreal dramas, and other unconventional approaches to the medium.

Contrasting Approaches to Animation

While some US animation directors produce thought-provoking work, European festivals have expressed disappointment with the majority of American entries in recent years. Unlike in the past, when US directors were well-represented at festivals like Annecy, contemporary American animators often focus on acquiring technical skills for employment in the animation industry rather than creating groundbreaking films. Furthermore, some US festivals reject provocative European shorts due to concerns about controversy, as they rely on the support of wealthy patrons and tend to favor safer programming choices.

Support for European Film Projects

One significant disparity is the availability of production funding and services for film projects in Europe. Pitching events allow filmmakers to present their proposals, and winning awards can result in generous cash prizes or production support. These competitions often take place alongside festivals, seminars, and other industry events. Consequently, European filmmakers invest considerable effort in developing scripts, character designs, and storyboards that have the potential to secure necessary funds and services.

The opinions surrounding what makes a great animated film diverge between US and European perspectives. US animation often focuses on spectacle, financial returns, and a propensity for sequels, while European and Middle Eastern animation embraces pragmatism, thought-provoking narratives, and appeals to adult audiences. European festival-goers anticipate intellectually challenging and unconventional films, contrasting with US festivals' tendency to prioritize more mainstream and commercially safe content. Understanding and appreciating these divergent opinions can enhance cross-cultural appreciation of the diverse approaches to animated storytelling.

Fundraising and Animation Education in the US: Current Realities

In the US, funding for film projects, including animation, is scarce, with only a few state art commissions offering limited funds for worthwhile projects. For example, the New York State film commission provides grants of up to $10,000. Federal and state funding for films has never fully recovered from the cuts made during the 1980s. However,

internet fundraising platforms have emerged as a successful avenue for filmmakers like Bill Plympton, Don Hertzfeldt, and Signe Baumane, who have raised significant funds (sometimes surpassing $100,000) for their shorts and feature projects.

Challenges for US Short Filmmakers

Unfortunately, most digital short filmmakers in the US face limited opportunities to monetize their work through theatrical screenings or television broadcasts. The theater industry prioritizes feature-length films over shorts due to commercial considerations, such as selling concessions. Additionally, the majority of shorts are not in the standard Digital Cinema Package (DCP) format used in movie theaters today, which further limits their exhibition possibilities. Instead, exceptional shorts may find success by winning prize money at film festivals.

Animation Education in the US

Animation education in the US is often accompanied by high costs, leading many students to seek immediate employment after graduation to repay student loans. State-run colleges offer a more affordable alternative to private institutions and often boast excellent instructors and equipment. However, the objectives of animation students have shifted over time. Instead of aspiring to become outstanding artists creating award-winning shorts, most students focus on honing their craft through exercises in hand-drawn or computer-generated animation.

While some animation programs require students to complete one or more shorts to graduate, not all schools provide robust classes that develop strong storytelling skills. These skills are crucial for creating exceptional works that garner recognition and open doors to more diverse sources of income. Animator Vince Collins has observed that contemporary students study animation primarily to secure jobs, whereas in the past, when jobs were scarce, films were seen as personal expressions of creativity.

Different Values and Challenges

Many US animation students excel in mastering the technical aspects of animation but struggle with delivering compelling content. They often find it challenging to break away from the idea of literal storytelling, lacking an understanding of how to effectively utilize surrealism. It is crucial for students to expose themselves to a wide range of animations, studying and analyzing works from various artists and eras. Learning from the past and attending festivals to witness the latest works and connect with peers are invaluable aspects of an animator's education.

In the US, fundraising for animation projects faces limitations in public and private funding. Internet fundraising platforms have become a notable avenue for success. Animation education focuses on technical skills, and while many students lack strong storytelling abilities, exposure to diverse animation works and engagement with the industry through festivals can help broaden their perspectives and creative capabilities.

The cost of an animation education today is prohibitively expensive at most schools, forcing many young animators to seek immediate employment after graduation to begin paying off their hefty student loans. State-run colleges offer a more affordable alternative to private institutions, often providing excellent instructors and equipment.

In the United States, the goal of becoming an exceptional artist who creates award-winning shorts is no longer a common objective. Instead, most students primarily focus on mastering the technical aspects of creating hand-drawn or computer-generated animation through exercises. While some animation programs require students to complete one or more shorts as part of their graduation requirements, not all schools offer comprehensive classes that cultivate strong storytelling skills. These skills are crucial for creating outstanding works that can gain recognition and open doors to more lucrative opportunities.

Today, many US students excel in learning the fundamentals but struggle to deliver compelling content. They often find it challenging to break free from the notion that their work must be conveyed literally as a real-life experience, lacking an understanding of how to effectively employ surrealism. I firmly believe that students should expose themselves to a wide range of animation to learn various storytelling techniques. It is essential for animators to study and analyze the works of others, drawing inspiration from the past as an integral part of their education.[2]

The perception of what constitutes good or great animation for animation students today is largely shaped by the media they have consumed since childhood, consisting primarily of formulaic features and television shows. This highlights the importance of broadening their exposure to different approaches to animation. Personally, when I discovered Norman McLaren's groundbreaking work at the age of 12, it was a revelation. How many animation students today have had the opportunity to witness his incredible contributions or the works of numerous other talented artists funded by the National Film Board of Canada since 1941?

A comprehensive animation education cannot be condensed into quick, intensive courses that are prevalent in our country. While there are schools offering intensive training programs designed to secure entry-level jobs within a few months, many students struggle to keep up with the demanding workload and eventually burn out. These programs tend to be overly intensive.

In contrast, the students I have encountered in Europe and Israel have impressed me, with several of them establishing successful careers as

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[2] *Fortunately, there are thousands of excellent shorts available online for free, providing students with ample material to explore. However, they would greatly benefit from a curated guide introducing them to these remarkable works. I am currently working on such a guide, as I firmly believe that animation is not only a great art form but also a lifelong learning experience, echoing the sentiments of Richard Williams and other directors.*

teachers. European educational institutions often provide more scholarships, funding, and equipment, reinforcing the importance of a well-rounded liberal arts education. In many European schools, student films that receive acclaim often emerge from collaborative team efforts. By examining the origin of student films showcased at prestigious festivals such as Stuttgart, Annecy, Zagreb, or the Student Academy Awards in the US, one can discern which schools possess the most robust and comprehensive curricula.

The wide variety of films showcased at international festivals is a testament to the sophistication and education level of a society. While I appreciate the emergence of US films tackling controversial topics like climate change, I have long wondered why European artists address other important issues that their American counterparts tend to ignore. I hope this article sheds light on the underlying reasons for these differences.

When I had the opportunity to lecture in China approximately 20 years ago, I encountered students who were markedly different from those I had met in Europe, Israel, or the US. They primarily engaged in classroom exercises with rows of computer stations. During my lecture at the Beijing Film Academy, I addressed a large audience of at least 300 people in an auditorium. The vast scale of the space and the substantial number of attendees seemed to foster a serious and hardworking atmosphere, potentially intensifying competition. Most of those students eventually found employment on animation assembly lines in a rapidly growing industry that prided itself on the sheer volume of animation produced each year.[3]

Coincidentally, as I was writing this article, I received an email from the Jilin Animation Institute (JAI) in China, boasting a graduate employment rate of over 90%. Many of their graduates have secured positions in well-known enterprises within the animation, gaming, digital media, and mass media industries, positioning themselves as prominent talents.

In conclusion, I believe that the influence of Hollywood animated features and TV series has shaped the US public's perception, leading them to believe that these shows are so enjoyable and exceptional that there is no need to explore other forms of animation. Furthermore, the lingering perception that animation is primarily for children, albeit with some acknowledgment of adult-oriented content, still persists. Individuals who hold this view are generally content with the current state of mainstream animated entertainment.

Returning to the initial thought that sparked my interest in writing this report, an anonymous source commented, "As for film festivals, the US is being left behind because the US is frankly too busy with its egocentric superiority complex to think anything could possibly be better than these 50 states. I think it is part of the reason international festivals no longer look towards us. They just don't see anything all that interesting anymore."

Initially taken aback by this blunt statement, I began to reflect on the images of people proudly displaying foam rubber hands with a single raised finger, chanting "we're number one" that often populate television screens. It reminded me of the almost fanatical crowds who fervently believed that their leader could make America great again (did he?). I assume there are indeed many individuals who are content with life as it is and have no desire to expand their interests.

What will it take to introduce people to independent animation and allow them to decide for themselves if it can add positive value to their lives? Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* serves as a film that introduces intelligent ideas without making the audience feel as though they are being preached to. Public television's "Brief but Spectacular Moments" on the PBS News Hour also subtly introduces viewers to the concept of animated documentaries. Additionally, there are impressive and well-animated segments featured in science programs aired on PBS and other networks. The more exposure the public has to these and other creative uses of animation, the greater the potential for some individuals to develop an interest in non-Hollywood animation. Unfortunately, PBS does not have as many viewers as major networks or Fox.

Perhaps in the future, a cable TV network or internet channel will regularly schedule shows featuring animation for open-minded adults (distinct from Adult Swim content), similar to how FM radio has dedicated stations for jazz, classical music, and other adult-oriented content. I hope that colleges and universities with liberal arts departments will eventually offer classes in animation history and appreciation. One day, we may even witness the emergence of serious courses dedicated to animation literacy and aesthetics.

It is also crucial for our government to reinstate its support for the arts by providing grants and scholarships to artists and artistic projects. Canada's National Film Board serves as an excellent example by producing exceptional films that demonstrate the country's commitment to supporting the arts. In the past, the United States had an active National Endowment for the Arts, which funded a wide range of projects. Other government branches also had discretionary funds available. For instance, during a drought in the 1970s, I assisted a friend in creating a humorous water conservation public service announcement for the government (funded by the Department of the Interior). If political parties genuinely aspire to make America great again, why can't we revise funding for the arts? Supporting the arts resonates with many people far more than investing in an escalating arms race. While a strong military may make us mighty, increasing funding for the arts and humanities is necessary if the US is to be regarded as a truly great nation!

[3] I also had the privilege of meeting a class from Taiwan who visited the US for a better understanding of our animation industry. However, our discussion was cut short for a prominent highlight of their US visit - to an out-of-town discount shopping mall, where they intended to take advantage of affordable goods compared to Taiwan.

ASIFA Central UPDATES FOR SEPTEMBER and other Important Stuff and Things

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Briana Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Slightly Less Perplexed Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

Charging to a Retreat - 2023 Edition

ASIFA Central Zooms Online - *Dateline, Saturday August 26, 2023, Online, Same-time, Depending Upon the Zone*

Attendees Had to Fall Asleep to Wake Up to Event "It Was Like A Dream," Said Across-the-Planet Attendee

Over the course of nine, then ten, then ten and one-half hours, over 50 animators, students, educators, and enthusiasts streamed in and out of the 31st annual ASIFA Central retreat in August.

GVSU, through ASIFA Central President Julie Goldstein, hosted the web experience, recording much of it for later episodes on the chapter's *youtube* website. Julie Goldstein, fresh from her grand GRAM adventures, does it all!

Midnight in Mumbai

Time zones were the greatest challenge - west coast participants did quite well, but the "central" in "ASIFA Central" perplexed some closer members in the midwest, who thought the noon launch was a 1pm event. With daylight savings in play, it could have been far more interesting from a log-in standpoint, "but who ever collects the interest on daylight savings, anyway?" quipped dozy member E. Gustibus Roue, who added, "time doesn't begin until after my first twelve cups of coffee." The award for furthest sign-in went to Shweta Marathe of India, who peered in at midnight in Mumbai. She was awarded honorary keys to the village of Edmore (once they are found), with a free tour of the backyards and playgrounds of teenage Winsor McCay. She blushed at the honor (the video reception was that good).

With the initial group introductions:

Julie Goldstein, ASIFA Central President, began the introductory rounds while controlling The Big Board

Fu Yang brought a background in stop-motion and 3D - Fu's film *Fortune Cookie* was featured at the St. Louis film festival this summer with Michael Long's recent release: https://poplifestl.com/tag/gorilla-tactics/

David Baker remains lightly retired into "keeping it human," recalling his days of academe and KAFI, noting animation may be the last link to individual artistry, but still conducts workshops

Sarah Schmidt experienced animation goosebumps and invited all to her Chicago showings on September 28-29

Ian Bobinac carried the baton to the next level of demystifying Photoshop and is still unpacking cases from his predecessor at KCC in Battle Creek

Lynn Tomlinson returned through her studio, following last year's astonishing stop-motion warm clay workshop

Josh Hakin described the picket lines in LA

Josh *Harrell* took a breather between educational induction inspirations at CCS and Interlochen

Tyler Newby, CCAD (Columbia College of Art and Design) adjunct, shared the aura of mixing everything-together-all-at-once with 3D printing and art toys

Sir Charles (codename "Chuck") Wilson braved the Lansing area blackouts and became a soft, disembodied voice weaving stories of forensic animation, heritage recipes, and animation history

Michael Long was able to enhance his mailing list for the monthly coffee breaks he hosts from St. Louis (Missouri), sharing secret gorilla handshakes and grooming etiquette in the process

Deanna Morse, Our Most Serene ASIFA International President, encouraged attention to the upcoming OIAF in September and participation in October's IAD, with more information at ASIFA.org and ASIFA.net. She also dislikes bullet points. Yr hmbl typst is such a tease.

Steve Leeper shared his unending enthusiasm for his program with CMU and his multiple works in progress

Shweta Marathe, already stimulated by the time difference, shared the status of her award-winning student film, *Swim* - https://shweta-marathe.wixsite.com/folio

Tracy Miller-Robbins announced that teaching in one place isn't strenuous enough, so she'll be teaching in *three locations* this coming academic year. All that stretching! It's Education YOGA!

Bri Yarhouse remained in a state of delighted exaltation over her first year at Interlochen, promoting the international-level IAD celebration of our common humanity - with poetry AND kayaks, AND dashing from her new home base to Ottawa and then to Grand Rapids for helping judge this year's ArtPrize. Still more Yoga!

Yr Hmbl Typst was also present, but oddly silent while taking notes. The coffee hadn't kicked in for him yet, either. But he wanted all to remember that Edmore, Michigan, is where parents and relatives of Winsor McCay are buried, *and they're gonna stay buried.*

And Then the Retreat Began!

SESSION ONE

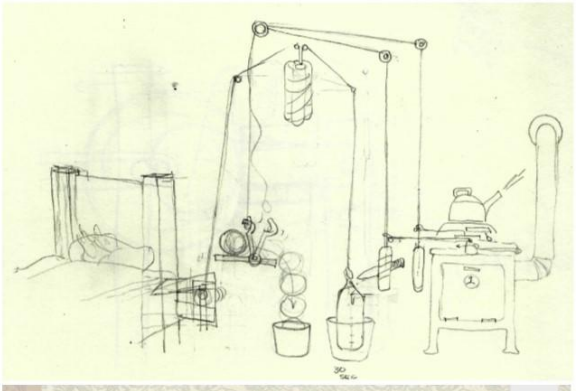
With *Gorilla My Dreams*, Michael Long gave the background to his current film, *Gorilla Tactics,* now migrating among the international film festival circuits. (See the aforementioned link: https://poplifestl.com/tag/gorilla-tactics/) It's a film about realizing a childhood dream, the ownership of a gorilla suit, but accepting the loopholes permitted by adulthood. His "chaotic creative process" created an audio/visual puzzle which had him continuously engaged in the feint and flèche of editing. *Gorilla Tactics* invokes the power of prayer, King Kong, and Ernie Kovacs in a youthful quest for a genuine, proper, monkey suit. Spoiler alert: *Gorilla Tactics* will be featured among the films of this year's ASIFA Central IAD reel!

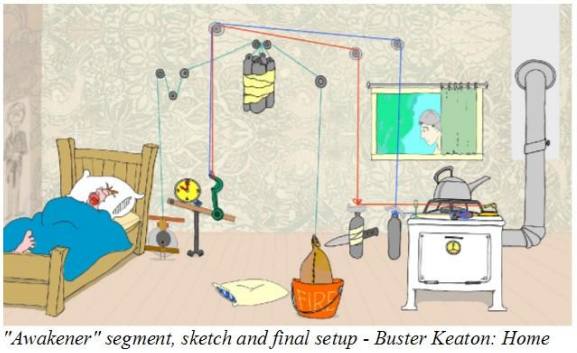
An update note: "Gorilla Tactics" took Best Animated Narrative Film at the St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase on July 20.

"It was a thrill to see it play on the Hi-Pointe screen and to hear audience reactions. Besides the nifty certificate, each winner got to select a special object. I chose a new pack of Bicycle Playing Cards, Foil Back Cobalt--just because." – Michael Long

n the steaming heat of pre-WWI summers, vaudevillians retreated from their intemperate stages to bask in the cooling beaches off Muskegon, in a suburb called Bluffton. The manager for this location was a knock-about slapstick stage star named Joe Keaton, ringleader for the popular group, The Three Keatons. The youngest of this group was named Buster, who later became among the greatest of the silent era film comedians, but at the time was a child star who never had the chance to be a child. Bluffton gave him that chance. These years have been under-documented, but a recently completed feature, *Buster Keaton: Home,* explores this period through interviews (including grandchildren and comedy legend Carl Reiner). documents, and - dare we say it here - *animation.* The

pandemic slowed the 2017 production process, but in 2022 Jim Schaub reached out to ASIFA Secretary Jim Middleton to provide three, then six, and ultimately nine animated pieces for the film. *Animating Keaton* was Middleton's presentation on his production process, using a limited budget and existing (some would say outdated) software to make 4K renderings. 3800 drawings later, about seven minutes were ready to add to the feature. In keeping with his reputation, Mr. Middleton's presentation lasted longer than that seven minutes. He owes everyone a ten minute nap. To help that, here is his progress file, online, as the renders and re-renders get reloaded: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/796085457/16a55992f8 and the slides from the discussion are at "Post 597" at https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com



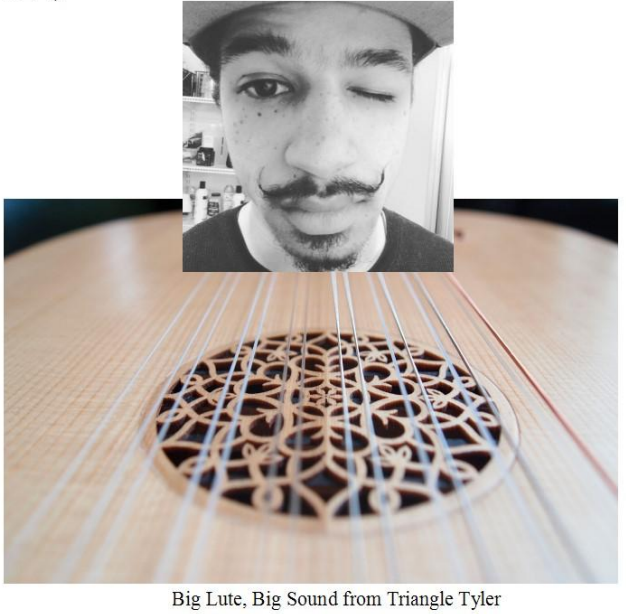


"Awakener" segment, sketch and final setup - Buster Keaton: Home

Who wouldn't like to eviscerate a beanie baby? Or two? How about an entire collection? Sarah Schmidt is here for you. She crashed her computer for your maniacal fluff lust, with her initial tests evolving into a full program, with "two rips a week" between September 2023 and next June. So much fiber was released that air filters were called in to prevent an OSHA situation. Using DragonFrame, she is wrapping up this "first-year project," with her collectibles creating new value by the destruction of old ones. Cheer her progress at - https://www.instagram.com/beaniebreakdown (an elegantly twisted mutant beanie reconstruction welcomes you) - *and* check out her curated films at the Sunshine Mall Malt Adult festival in her fanzine here: https://www.maltadult.com/ .

Sarah Schmidt's Frankenbeanie

The *first* session ended with Triangle Tyler and His Student Orchestra. Tyler Newby understands that with Big Lutes you get Big Sound. And with Big Sound you need a Big Screen jammed with animation - even if it's *a two hour concert*. Time to get loopy! Using node-based Unity programming, he created a series of images set for spontaneous control during a live performance. However, "a spider out of time" created a snafu just an hour before the show which Mr. Newby corrected, on the fly, across a series of naughty nodes. Without a cardiac arrest. Some in attendance at the presentation became light-headed at the situation, recalling a line from an old song, "weak men would faint, while strong men would cry out in grief!" (from *Ach, How That Woman Could Cook*, Gus Kahn, 1914)



Big Lute, Big Sound from Triangle Tyler

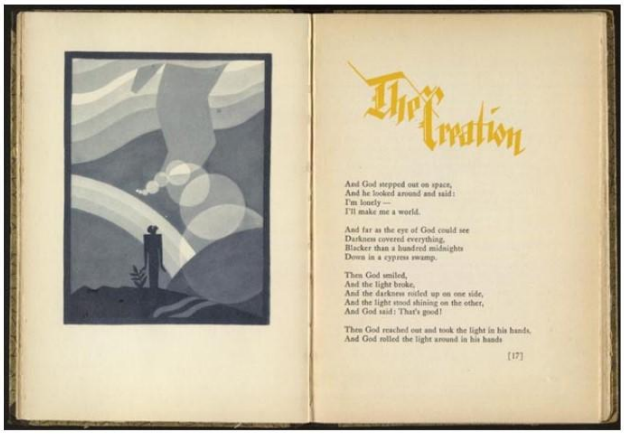
Then, after a break that seemed to last barely a breath, came

SESSION TWO

Chris Sullivan began with a discussion of thematic use of visual dynamics demonstrating the tensions between mothers and daughters, using *The Sky Crawlers* (Sukai Kurora), a 2008 war film, directed by Mamoru Oshii as an extended example. The film had a dreamy, almost slow-motion feel to it, with subtle interplay between Cantonese and Mandarin accents as two generations vied for the attentions of the same young man. The film is set within an alternative history where, while the world is at peace, two rival corporations hire fighter pilots to engage in actual combat operations against each other – in order to ease the tension of a populace accustomed to war and aggression. Heady stuff: Greek tragedy meets Manga meets *Rollerball*.

(A similar theme emerged in a later discussion during the retreat, with #7 Cherry Lane, Room at the Top, set during the 1967 pro-China, anti-British student uprising, where the forces of love were driving a break down in society's barriers with a three-way romance. Reviewers have noted that director Yonfan, had he created The Graduate, would likely have been on the side of Mrs. Robinson.)

Steve Leeper has been seeking animation styles that go beyond the "cartooniness" of ToonBoom's inherent style for his work on creation poetry, notably James Weldon Johnson's 1927 poem *The Creation* (https://poets.org/poem/creation), with the haunting opening line, "And God stepped out on space/And he looked around and said: I'm lonely—" He has explored new ways to animate darkness, with a black screen becoming a time-lapse of isopropanol, glycerin, and black ink. He has also been using thumbnail storyboard sketches, with the inherent struggle to have the intended animation match the texture of the original sketches, discovering in the process that working in charcoal is *exhausting*. He also encourages the concept for his students that a project doesn't always need a deadline – that some



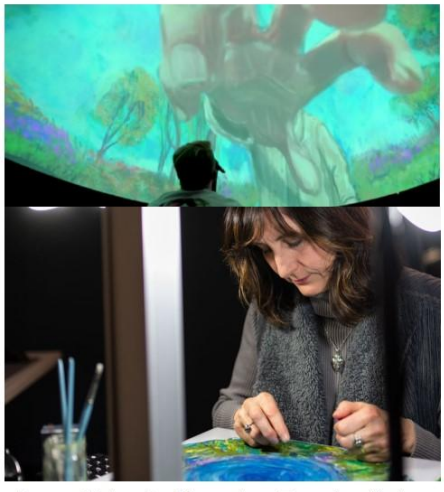
animation can become a life-long project, with discoveries along the way revealing as much to the external world as it does to an introspective creator. *Brother Thomas* is doing very well, too, by the way.

The *Ne Plus Ultra* bibliography listings from Orrin Scott continue to reveal the increase in interest in animation as a subject – while revealing a drop in advanced degrees in the visual and performing arts (4.4% BS, 1.8% MS, 0.8% PhD), while the pandemic resulted in many titles either not being released, or sent out in small, unpublicized packets (the production pipeline being squeezed for a potential tax-write off?). This created further challenging searches, derailing proper research and publication documentation. He also noted an increase in fiction books involving animation (consider *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick). Mr. Scott also manages the ASIFA Central Discord site, seeking input on how to make the experience better as a perpetuating virtual lodge for the group.

Another breathless break, and then began

THE SHORT TALKS

Lynn Tomlinson returned after her demonstration to last year's retreat attendees on her stop motion, clay-on-glass technique featuring the music video, *Ten Degrees of Strange.* Her 2021 project, *Periscopic Gaze,* examines the movement of water using dense layers of oils and pastels, prompting Sweaty Eyeballs Animation Festival juror Kelley Bell to comment, "The execution of this film is masterful: clay-on-glass animation is already a medium that's notable for its plasticity, but some of the twists, turns and transformations in the film left me dumbstruck, honestly. It's a potent and visceral four-and-a-half minute treatise on the interconnectivity of nature, the futility of regret, and the inevitability of mortality."

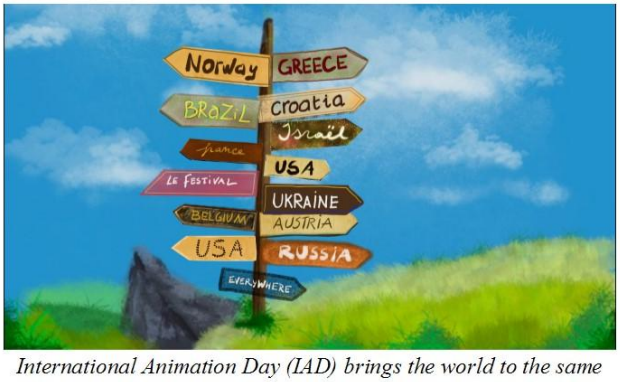


Towson Universitv Planetarium Dome installation and Lynn Tomlinson in a meditative state

Another recent project made fuller use of the Towson University planetarium, with an interdisciplinary subject "Light and Color," designed to be shown as part of an introductory physics course at the university, as well as in high school science classes. The full-dome and expanded animation experience at Towson University Planetarium is sampled at https://vimeo.com/786925018

Steve Leeper and has some special moves to bring a storyboard into a pitch-animatic, using Photoshop templates to build motion among his pencil drawings. The process involves the creation of action scripts within the Photoshop environment, timing the images from action beat to action beat, creating composite layers in the PS software and then using the import function of ToonBoom to use the layers to build a three-dimensional space. "This is a hack," he explained, to avoid the perceived layout limitations within other software packages, such as Storyboarder. He has created several videos demonstrating the process on Vimeo, and lo! here is a sample: https://vimeo.com/851977416

Guiding the animation phenomenon of Interlochen, and the approaching IAD would be enough to challenge anyone's calendar, but Bri Yarhouse announced at the retreat that she would be serving as juror for Grand Rapids' ArtPrize celebration this year. IAD permits animators to examine "what does it mean to be human," and the more than 50 films thus far provided for the event are an ample testament to that philosophical pursuit. Interlochen continues its legacy as being a destination high-school-level boarding experience with its intense, multidisciplinary programs, building its animation program under Bri's guidance in what she describes as "my dream job." Lynn Tomlinson has coordinated her stop motion clay workshop onsite there, James Suhr brought his expertise in storyboarding, Josh Harrell from CCS managed projects in physical media – and the Interlochen construction division has been busy modifying and creating animation workspaces to continue making Interlochen a major destination for learning the visual and performing arts. Aspiring animators can tap into wells of poetic inspiration, voice artistry, and public broadcasting facilities to create and learn what it does mean to be human.



International Animation Day (IAD) brings the world to the same table

THEN (never has retreating been such an advancement on charging subject matter!)

The INFLUENCE and IMPACT Experiences from ASIFA members

Michael Long started with 1963's *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, (whoops, one too many *Mads* there) with Saul Bass' pace-setting opening titles. The movie is condensed to under five minutes with his minimalist, manic, gleeful UPA style - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1A7bJD3atk

He also followed the existential train of thought for the retreat by recommending Bass' award winning short, *Why Man Creates*, especially the *Edifice* sequence - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkowV1L8l-0 - which predicts the tone of Frederick Back's *Tout-Rien* a decade later.

And, by the way, Gorilla Tactics is taking St. Louis by storm - here with VALET PARKING:

Jim Middleton was able to share the visuals for Ub Iwerk's Columbia production of *The Foxy Pup* (1937), noteworthy as Mel Blanc's first non-Warner's voice work, but which also served as inspiration for the color palette and background design animation within the documentary *Buster Keaton: Home*.

Background design from Iwerks' *Foxy Pup* (1937)

Chuck Wilson and GODZILLA brought everyone to a feverish appetite for a dinner break, with clips from the nearly 70 years of Japan's favorite export, with two more productions in the pipeline for 2024 release. He reviewed the entire Godzilla canon, reminiscing on youthful monster cinema visits with his aunt, with asides into animation spin-offs, derivations, and Deanna Morse's contribution to the genre in her stop-motion *Kitchen Creature Feature.* And remember, Simon can't spell! https://www.youtube.com/shorts/p14ugNSxf3U

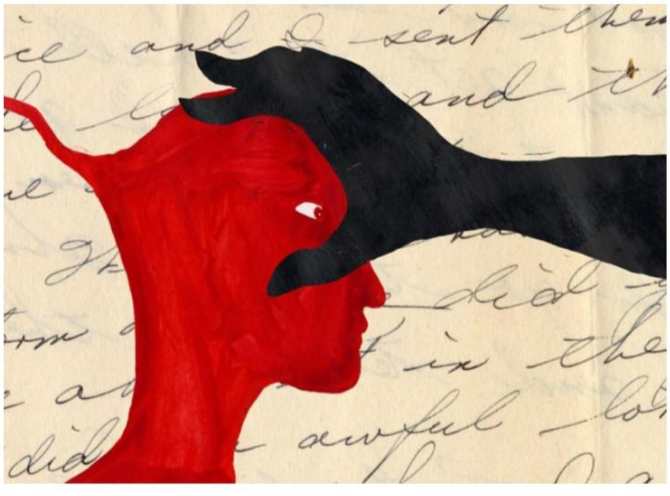
A DINNER BREAK!!

(but many brought their sandwiches to the zoom between presentations, and yr hmbl typst neglected to stop the recording, capturing some further rare animation insights. There was too much fun to allow sneaking off quietly for any reason)

AND THEN!!!!
Christine Panushka with *Blood of a Family Tree!*

The ability for a single animator to create an entire animated feature in a lifetime was unthinkable just a few decades ago. Technology has brought the singular benefit of building more feature animation auteurs to the public eye – as individual films have grown from the five x minute experiments of a generation ago, built over the course of years, to over an hour of ideas to share with the same production schedule.

Brief Bio of Christine Panushka: her film work includes *Nighttime Fears and Fantasies: A Bedtime Tale for a Young Girl* and *The Sum of Them*. She is also the creator of the award-winning website Absolut Panushka, which featured artwork by Priit Pärn, Jules Engel, Kihachiro Kawamoto, Ruth Hayes, The DeNoojiers and others, during its premiere. The site is no longer active, but a 300 page archive of the pages is available in the newsletter section of the ASIFA Central website - www.asifa.org . She recently retired and has stories to tell. Get out the popcorn!



The silhouette dance, skeletal lacing, framed and shaded as modern interpretations of classic woodcut illustrations trace images of genealogy through literal bloodlines. Physiological explanations give way to segments broken into themic chapters, inspired by the ability of images over 3000 years old to still reveal emotions by connecting with a neurologically primal subconscious. This is how Egyptian art can still communicate without words, and how rhythm and tone can blend sound and sight without words. Christine Panushka returned to "the essential nature of the form" in her feature and incorporated five original compositions into the soundtrack, changing the space to match the sound.

A condition creating a sanguine surfeit stimulated her to build a film that grew into its final structure in three years, compared to the usual time of ten for other productions. Experimental, evolving streams of consciousness described the trillions of coincidences that must happen to bring us to our present; hence, we never know what brought us here; such is the visceral quality of a bloodline.

She believes the term "experimental film" is not a genre, but a method. It takes a lot of work to slam into repeated dead ends, to look where every strand of inspiration may lead – in this regard, she regards the young Walt Disney as an experimental filmmaker and animator – he took a lot of risks to create a *Snow White* and when it comes to a film frame, she believes there is a "enough within the rectangle to keep me interested." During the discussion of her feature, attendee Mikhail Gurnevich noted that "animation is poetry," and that the relationship Christine developed with the Absolut vodka company in the 1990s created some of the most experimental animated films given literal commercial exposure. By this time, the specifics of the feature drifted along multiple paths regarding the creative and imaginative processes, that there are so many "featurettes" appearing as animators are giving themselves permission to dive deeper, and deeper, into subjects for a 30 or 40 minute film, regardless of the commercial potential. A film can become the same work of art

as a layered, detailed painting that one may gaze upon for hours at a time and draw more meaning with each observation.

From Hiroshima, 2014 - the late, the great Paul Bush, Anita Lebeau, Deanna Morse, Christine Panushka

This is not to say that experimental films lack rules. The discussion broke apart a cinematic composition into rules that differ from structure. Rules can evolve as the artist proceeds, but the structure of a film should be considered the solid scaffolding with a distinct shape. *Blood of the Family Tree* is built on dossiers, or chapters, each complete within itself. The point of the rules is to communicate without speech, to move beyond speech, admittedly, "not for a huge audience."

In a short film, every second has a greater weight; a feature in experimentation, should be considered another means of communication, but for all its protracted volume, should not be considered an artistic "milestone," but a unit of the creator's overall work.

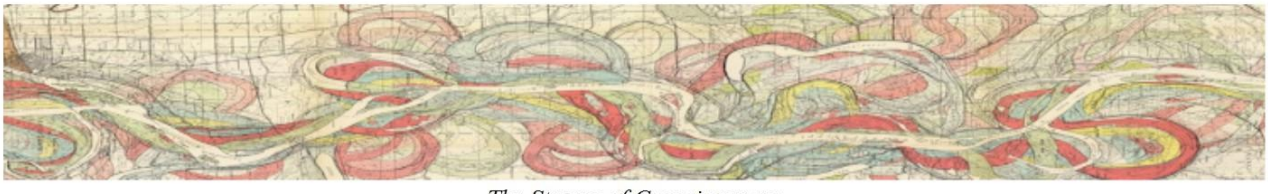
Longer films need repetition to create almost a mantra, building to a point where the animator should feel, "I'm in trouble now." Working on notes, rewrites, reconsiderations, broken by quiet moments to dig into the unusual, the subconscious, the internal universe, until something breaks through the uncertainty into a dreamy connectivity that can only be expressed visually; words at that point are the corruption of an idea.

At this point, two hours had passed, the multitudes of Whitman had condensed to the dozen of determined Retreaters, and the *Blood of the Family Tree* was a referential link. Christine bid adieu, and after a brief time, one, then another, reappeared online and a second wave of discussions emerged, from fires smoking the skies of Oregon, to the delicate flip books of Ruth Hayes, to cyanotypes, clocks, After Effects feeling like "shooting on threes," and the notion of ideas as spinning, airborne discs of pizza dough, working with clay to feel the spirit.

"Anizoomation still exists, too," Deanna reminded us, when the caul-covered Zoom possessed an experimental expression of its own. It seems like a far away world now.
https://www.deanimations.com/

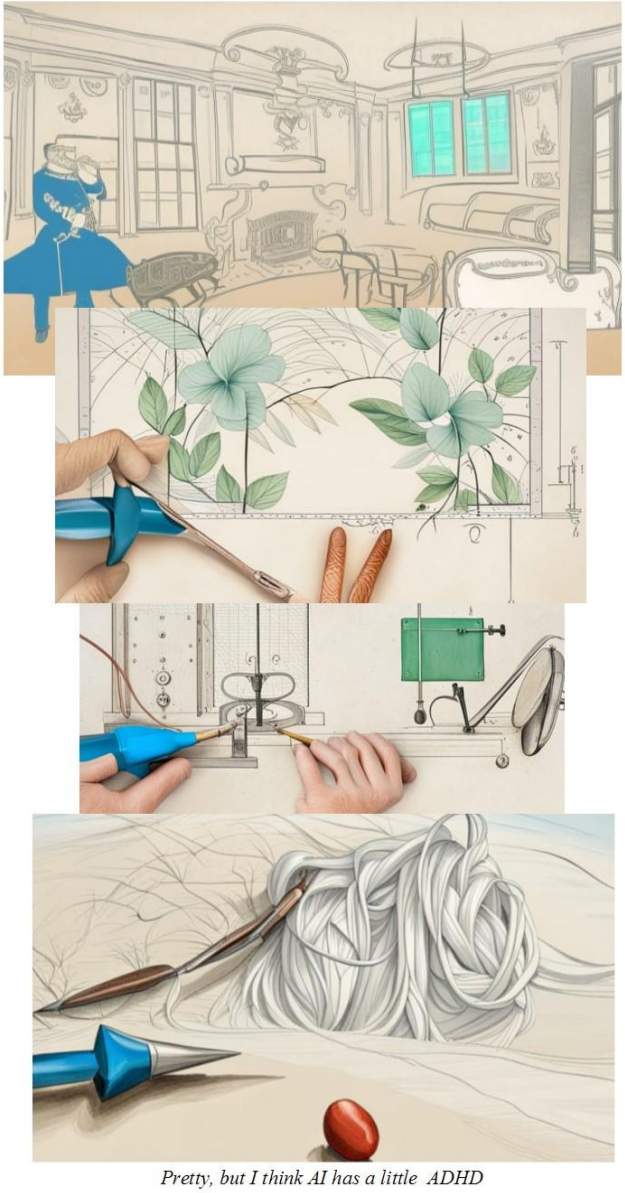
Then, to the horror of those in the throes of sleep deprivation, the realization that the retreat didn't have a workshop this year, but worse, that the retreat failed in its primary mission, a goal above all others, to have an ASIFA Central Cake flip, slip, and majestically flop to the ground in memory of all those cakes who died before their just desserts at Starved Rock retreats, which in a fit of irony, ultimately had all the cake it could manage, if it only had a mouth to appreciate it.

And a parting thought for the evening - "You know, there are so many ways to screw things up with the newer software. It gives me hope that experimental film will always be with us."


The Stream of Consciousness

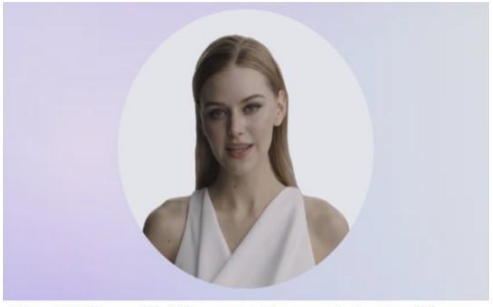
Sidebar - AI Didn't Save Any Time Whatsoever

During the tight animation production time for *Buster Keaton: Home,* yr hmbl typst thought AI might be helpful in generating some eclectic titles, in the form of either woodcuts or copperplate engravings. It took too long for not very useful results (original image on page 3). It seems that Yr Hmbl Typst is speaking DOS and HTML to Apache Groovy and F#. Interesting, however...



Pretty, but I think AI has a little ADHD

However, "Heygen" AI is terrifying, even without AR. It read *Jabberwocky* without so much as a hiccup, which is something yr hmbl typst can rarely do:



"I said *Twas Brillig*, you doomed, insignificant human!"

https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com/2023/08/pst-599-now-im-scared.html

The Center for Visual Music Asks A Question

Did Oskar Fischinger make the first music videos? Why is he called the Father of Visual Music? A deep dive into his work and influence, "Oskar Fischinger and Visual Music," the CVM Virtual Seminar returns with a shorter version this season. In five weekly Zoom sessions, illustrated talks by curator/film historian (not to mention bon vivant and raconteur) Cindy Keefer presents screenings of Fischinger's important and rare films (plus other key visual music films), infrequently seen archival materials, and conducts participant discussions.

(Courtesy CVM) - thanks, Cindy!

The series will run through September and October, running Wednesdays at 11 am PST on these days: Sept. 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25. There is a reduced fee for this shorter version, but limited enrollment, and the CVM is registering now.

continued Λ

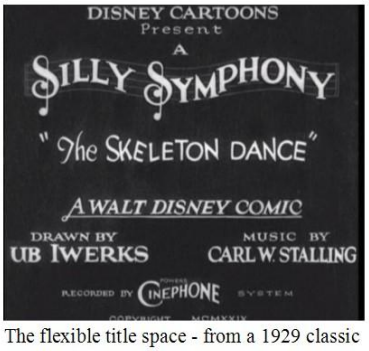
For full details on the Fischinger Exploration, see the Screenings & Events page, Link for info on the Fischinger seminar beginning Sept 27:
www.centerforvisualmusic.org/Events.htm
Link, become a Member of CVM:
www.centerforvisualmusic.org/Membership
www.centerforvisualmusic.org/Events.htm
Also, their popular Expanded Cinema Master Class also returns this fall, *Jordan Belson, Vortex Concerts, and Origins of Expanded Cinema.* Contact the CVM site to be added to The List of Visual Greatness.

The Public Domain Corner – Disney and Extending Copyright

Musings by Yr Hmbl Typst

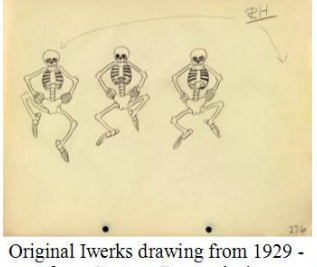
A few years ago, there was a vinyl picture-disc release of the soundtrack to *Steamboat Willie*, a soundtrack originally slated for the public domain in 2028. However, not *this particular performance* of that soundtrack - there are some subtle "adjustments" to this recording, notably a clean up from the Powers Cinesound system of the late 1920s. Anyone trying to use *this particular* performance could be visited upon by the Disney legal team, a notoriously humorless bunch of litigators.

Mickey's first slide - *Steamboat Willie* drawing by Ub Iwerks (1928)



The flexible title space - from a 1929 classic

Sticking to the same film, Disney + has a "tribute" to Mickey among its recent streaming specimens, in his "new" iteration called *Steamboat Silly*. In it, the "new" Mickey releases the 1928 black-and-white Mickey while showing a home movie - which is riddled with re-drawn scenes from "Steamboat Willie." So, again, when 2024 arrives, the same legal dream team can sit on the front stoop of anyone making use of the original Mickey, claiming that it is making use of this recent version of the film, which will be under copyright until 2119 (96 years for "published works").


Original Iwerks drawing from 1929 - from Cartoon Research site

Silly Symphonies, anyone? Well, the classic 1929 *Skeleton Dance* has already gone through several variations from its 16mm EmGee film license, to VHS, to DVD, before this new streaming version on Disney +. The original release had a silent opening credit, then it was "modernized" with a faux intro music (that jarred against the actual soundtrack when it kicked in), then with an adjusted frame size to make it "authentic," then back to the silent opening for the Disney + production. Each soundtrack version represented a new "performance," with a 100 year long copyright attached. In addition, the new streaming version of *Skeleton Dance* has been given a digital cleanup, balancing contrast and flicker, cleaning the soundtrack, and even adjusting a sequence where the original film had the performing skeleton move off register from the background. Again, each of these versions represents a "new performance," and performances (ie, soundtracks) qualify for the 100 year copyright. The cleaned up visual version, as "published material," qualifies for 96 years.

This follows the production practice of Disney, from its VHS versions onwards, to not identify the copyright year of the film on the packaging - then it was to obscure the age of the movie ("1938! Eeuh! Old movie! Eeuh!"), but it also turned out effective to obscure when that film would be in the public domain (even with all that care, *The Mad Doctor* and *Minnie's Yoo-Hoo* slipped through the cracks) (people lost their jobs over that one, I'm sure).

So, if anyone is chomping at the bit to use these films, it'll be necessary to be certain that the 1928 and 1929 versions, specifically, are the source. Or, creating a different version, with a documented trail of production of drawing, rendering and artwork, will likely get past the realm of DisneyLaw. I suggest

using a headless chicken, dressed and ready for Sunday dinner, piloting a tugboat. Have something like that whistle, and theater-goers will pack the aisles!

The ultimate irony of all this is that, had any of these current copyright laws been in place in 1928 or 1929, the musical cues that Walt, Ub, and Carl employed for these groundbreaking films would not have been in the public domain.

What a whirl'd.

"As Seen on TV"

Streaming services have taken over the way people watch TV at home, and as a result, the broadcast TV commercial has become a dying art. Luckily, the Internet Archive houses a collection of Classic TV Commercials, with almost 17,000 different advertisements dating back to 1949. Many of these are animated (imagine that!). https://archive.org/details/classic_tv_commercials

ASIFA International Update

with Deanna Morse

Dear friends,
I wanted to share a report I wrote after our two partner festivals. There were some ideas about how to invest our reserve for the benefit of international activities, and also my reflections on the importance of ASIFA.

Currently, films are being offered and uploaded for the October 28 International Animation Day Celebration. Plans for the ASIFA Prize at Ottawa are solidifying. Soon we will ask for nominations for ASIFA Prize 2024, IAD poster 2024, and continue our discussions of other initiatives.

Two partner Festivals: Zagreb and Annecy - Two dynamic ASIFA member meetings
Zagreb Croatia welcomed us with tasty homemade cakes and other delights. We, 16 members, representing 9 countries, introduced ourselves, and tossed around ideas about what ASIFA international might do, specifically with our small reserve in the next few years.

There were some energetic suggestions!
- More festival discounts, and partner discounts
- giving a prize in the name of ASIFA at festivals- like 500€
- one or two curated screenings a year offered by ASIFA, a mix of young's and masters
- meetings at festivals, perhaps around a significant award
- having a project for grown-ups similar to AWG. Similar to the poster projects created for IAD, one theme, many variations.

Members were happy to meet each other and share ideas about our future. In true festival form, watching the clock, we ran off to go to a panel discussion about artificial intelligence, also our future.

Then…. at the bustling Annecy, we met at the Bonleiu coffee shop. Postcards and buttons were distributed to 17 happy ASIFA members from 10 countries. Without microphones, we made introductions, including passing around a phone with a facetime call to meet the new ASIFA India President who was unable to get his visa. It was one of those wonderful dual moments, in-person and Zoomy.

As Ilya Bereznickas was sketching caricatures of each of us, a spontaneous WhatsApp was initiated to share party information and continue friendships. Unfortunately, technology failed us…but we did manage to run into each other again, familiar faces in the sea of 15,820 attendees at Annecy.

The Importance of ASIFA

ASIFA is an organization of members, individual animators working in various fields, reflecting the many facets of animation. The local and national chapters are central to our structure. Each chapter has its own purpose, its own characteristics, activities, personalities. We represent auteur, corporate, new technologies, entertainment, education, and more. Chapters offer legal advice, equipment, social activities, festivals, educational, economic development, and more.

We frequently refer to the International ASIFA as an umbrella, connecting those national groups. Again and again, we heard the importance of why we are in that umbrella, why we are international. It is unique to be more than just a national group. To be part of a larger entity, a larger purpose. It elevates the national group status. Some chapters can use this to get government support. Members feel that they are part of a larger family. It allows members to connect for exchange, co-production, support, friendship.

And all of this is because of our shared love of the power of animation. And our belief that animation can communicate across borders, making the world a smaller place. Promoting cultural understanding through the art of animation.

Yes.

Deanna Morse
ASIFA President, president@asifa.net

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) September, 2023, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account:
https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.

Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!

ASIFA Central

November- December | *"IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!"* | MMXXIII[AoDi]

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Occasionally Bothersome Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

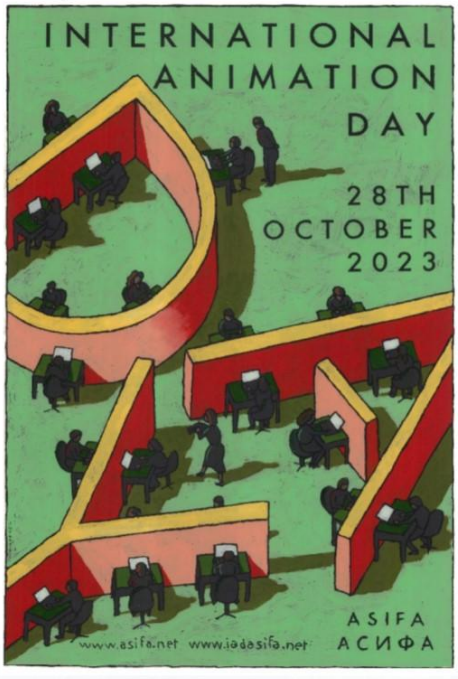
With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

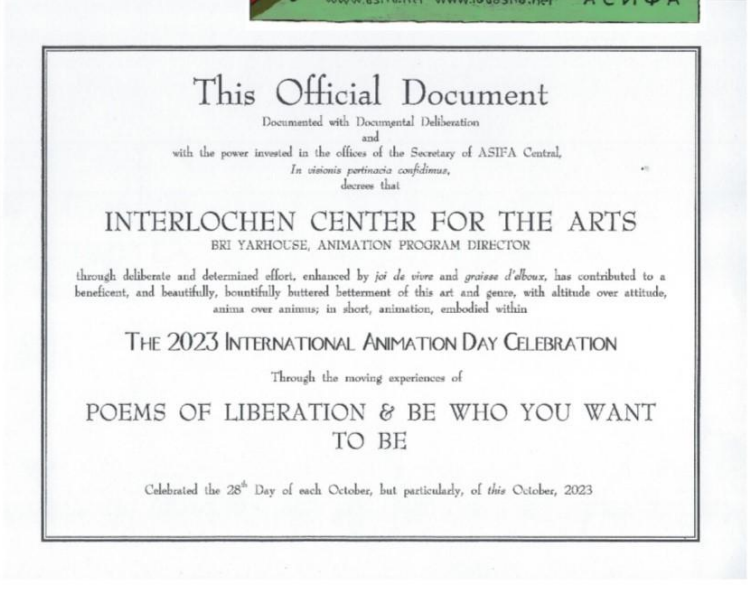
INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION DAY 2023 - AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 TOONS!

(Ok, so it was 80-*two*)

The ASIFA Central Reel Included:

Morning Coffee - Tracy Miller-Robbins
Building a Portfolio - Peaches Wilczak
Deer in Traditional Arts - Toroska Salari - ASIFA Iran
Solidarity - Sara Golebiowska - Poland
Microshort and Mental Wellness PSAs - CMU - Stephen Leeper,
Donks - Felix Colgrave - ASIFA Australia
Gorilla Tactics - Michael Long
Red Fire - Mona Shahi - Iran
Be Who You Want To Be - Interlochen Center for the Arts - Bri Yarhouse, director
Flip's Circus featuring Gertie - Winsor McCay
Carny Obscura - Gary Schwartz
Buster Keaton: Home - Animated Sequences - Jim Middleton
Fortune Cookie - Fu Yang - Webster University
Gnosis - Peaches Wilczak - Michigan
Elegy for an Elephant - Liao Xiangzhong - Communication University of China - ASIFA China
Swim/Tinker - Shweta Marathe - ASIFA Central Ambassador to Mumbai
Through the Looking Glasses - Morgan Eng - ASIFA South
Post-Proto - Aneta Siurnicka - Poland
Stained/Iffy - Gary Schwartz
Poems of Liberation - Interlochen Center for the Arts - Bri Yarhouse, director





This Official Document

Documented with Documental Deliberation and with the power invested in the offices of the Secretary of ASIFA Central, *In visionis pertinacia confidimus*, decrees that

INTERLOCHEN CENTER FOR THE ARTS
BRI YARHOUSE, ANIMATION PROGRAM DIRECTOR

through deliberate and determined effort, enhanced by *joi de vivre* and *graisse d'elbows*, has contributed to a beneficent, and beautifully, bountifully buttered betterment of this art and genre, with altitude over attitude, anima over animus; in short, animation, embodied within

THE 2023 INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION DAY CELEBRATION

Through the moving experiences of

POEMS OF LIBERATION & BE WHO YOU WANT TO BE

Celebrated the 28th Day of each October, but particularly, of *this* October, 2023

Submissions already coming in for 2024!

Over 330 Viewers for the IAD Reel in the Greater ASIFA Central Region!

The ASIFA Central showreel and the O!PLA reel from Poland garnered an audience of over 330 for the chapter's 2023 IAD. Expanded international showings were held in Great Britain, to Poland, and India; and, stateside, from Oregon to Ohio, from Missouri to across Michigan. ASIFA Central animators were featured in South Korea, the Netherlands, Australia, and Poland. New and established ASIFA Central members are already preparing for the 2024 showreel.

Bri Yarhouse, international IAD coordinator, was in China for the celebration, Deanna Morse was in Europe absorbing the animated glow in Greece and Bulgaria, and chapter coordinator Jim Middleton was in Edmore, Michigan, where the parents of Winsor McCay are buried, making sure they stayed buried (there were reports that his edit of *Flip's Circus* had McCay spinning in his current restless place, but they were false reports spread by the ghost of John Bray. Jealousy in the *après-vie,* apparently, because nobody has re-purposed *Bobby Bumps* lately).

Deanna Morse, breaking world records, surfboarding across Europe - October 2023

Bri and Diek Grober, from ASIFA South Africa, meet in China because the weather in October is just right

Bri Yarhouse and Johnchill Lee, President of ASIFA China

Bri and interpreter Vivien - China

Bri Yarhouse in China, annihilating the challenges of multiple time zones.

INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION DAY STORIES CONTINUE –A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL

Bri Yarhouse Update from Interlochen

Interlochen Group Challenge #2 - November 2023

(From FB Posting) *2023 Interlochen Animated Pitch Challenge Teams!* Julia Pott, creator and show runner for "Summer Camp Island," on Cartoon Network spent a week workshopping with my animation students along with students from Creative Writing, Film and New Media, Visual Arts, Interdisciplinary, Music Production and Singer Songwriting disciplines at Interlochen Center for the Arts, all to create animated television pitches! It was a truly interdisciplinary adventure that culminated with a pitch presentation, including the opening themes, performed live on stage with storyboards, visuals, and so much more! Animation professionals reviewed the pitches and provided feedback, and the entire program was made open to the public on November 2nd.

https://www.interlochen.org/.../2023-interlochen-animated...

Edmore and Interactive Gertie

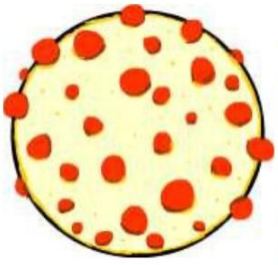
Among the IAD festivities in Edmore was an interactive film featuring Gertie the Dinosaur and the attending audience, transported to the Paleolithic Era by the Wonder of GertieScope, where she answered questions about the wheel (*it won't catch on*), whether cavemen taste like chicken (*yum, gimme two!*), and if she can relate to Taylor Swift (*oh, totally, we're complete BFFs*). You can play with Gertie, create your own interview and discussion, and download it on Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/872392959

The ASIFA Central reel also celebrated Winsor McCay in a repurposed edit of his uncompleted film, *Flip's Circus* (1918-1922), integrating clips from the nearly lost fragments of *Gertie on Tour*. https://vimeo.com/872302094

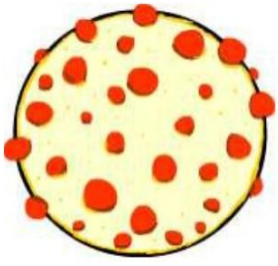
Yr Hmbl Typst Generates Future Recycling for IAD

With the local newspapers tiring of documenting their perpetual township battles against science and batteries, it was perhaps a relief for them to have something completely different to report - so information on the IAD and local connections was quickly snapped up by papers in Greenville, Big Rapids, and Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, saturating the greater tri-county area. All three publications were in a near dead-heat to give the event front-page, above the fold status.

Deanna Returns from Greece and Bulgaria - with EGAD!



ASIFA International President Deanna Morse was dashing across Europe during the IAD celebrations, monitoring wedding progressions in Greece and the world of Bulgarian animation, while communicating with international and chapter members on the progress of multiple IAD showings. She returned to her home base of Grants Pass, Oregon, where further showings were scheduled, but noticed a cough and...uh-oh... *this 'Vid didn't stand for Video!*



So she did the right thing and forwarded notes and took lots of naps and drank plenty of fluids, and now she is back to being UberDeanna, President among Presidents, Animatrice among Animatrix, and superlative Aunt among Aunties.

Deanna's 2023 IAD remarks on the showing in Grants Pass, without the apostrophe, included these most sublime proclamations:

Hi from Deanna Morse, I am an animation artist and current President of the International Animation Association. I am also a cheerleader for the arts in Grants Pass – a museum member – Hi Hyla! And a member of COPA – hi, Cal! … and I am SO sorry not to host with you tonight. I returned from a trip, and tested positive – it turned out to be a family super-spreader event. You don't want to join my family right now!

SO, Hooray! this is our annual Worldwide Celebration of Animation. October 28 is recognized as the birth of this artform – it's the Anniversary of the first public projection of a hand drawn animated film, in Paris – in 1892. And two decades ago, we, ASIFA, proclaimed this date and event as a day of celebration – and, across the world, tens of thousands of people join the party. Today, in Egypt, Austria, Greece, Japan, South Africa, India, China, Portugal, Korea – and Grants Pass, Oregon – we gather, we pause, and we celebrate animated filmmaking.

We have two programs tonight – The first celebration was curated by Michigan pharmacist-animator Jim Middleton, a prolific genius who loves history and never sleeps. This 45 minute program features films from the Midwest animation chapter.

Some student films were made solo, some as teams, and some as variations on a theme. Interlochen is a residential high school – talented kids under 18.

Flip's Circus film – Jim reasembled old drawings from American Animation Pioneer Winsor McCay, who made beautiful nouveau style comics and performed live in Vaudeville with his animations.

Each year, the ASIFA Animation

Entertainment

Section B

Grants Pass Daily Courier

Edith Decker, 541-474-3724 or edecker@thedailycourier.com

Thursday, Dece

Deanna Morse (center) stands with her neices Kaylee Henslee, 10, (left) and Emily Henslee, 13, in front of the duck mural in downtown Grants Pass. The Morse's film "Art Curious," one of the two short animated films Morse has in the Grants Pass Museum of Art's membership exhibit.

Infinite variety: Museum members show

By Kathleen Aleks
of the Daily Courier

The Grants Pass Museum of Art's fall membership exhibit features 197 pieces of art by 115 artists.

And while the show features plenty of the usual suspects — acrylic, oil and watercolor paintings, ceramic and stone sculpture, photography, drawings and woodwork — it also includes two more unusual art forms: miniatures by Diane Fisher and short animated films by Deanna Morse.

Fisher submitted two minia-

Take a look

WHAT: 2023 Membership Exhibit, 197 art pieces by 115 artists

WHERE: Grants Pass Museum of Art, 229 S.W. G St., Grants Pass

WHEN: through Dec. 21, open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday

ADMISSION: Free

INFORMATION: 541-479-3290, gpmuseum.com

castles, churches and wineries. "That inspired me, to make fruit, the wire and cloth people and the landscaping — she made from scratch.

Fisher even equipped the castle with electricity. A battery supplies juice to the banquet hall chandelier, the fireplace and a lamppost at the front gate.

"It's those little touches that really make it fun," she says.

Deanna Morse's two short animated films are a first for the museum membership show.

"I'm excited about featuring a new medium," says museum director Hyla Lipson.

draws my work," she says.

Morse's interest in film began while she was undergraduate student at Iowa State University in the 1970s.

"I was interested in what you could express with different art forms," she says. "And I found there were certain limits to sculpture and painting."

In a film class, she was asked to do a reverse storyboard of a commercial, basically deconstructing it into its main visual elements.

Her assignment was a Pillsbury Dough Boy commercial.

"I had no idea how these

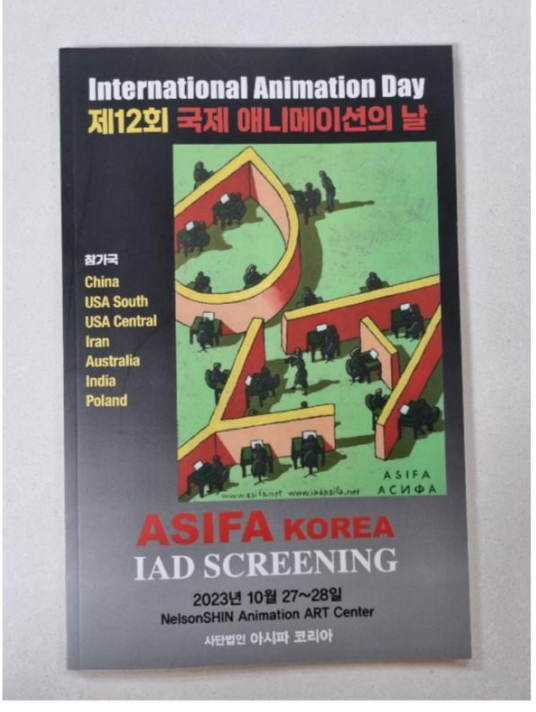
Diane Fisher points out the worki quiet hall of the detailed, miniatur that's part of the Grants Pass Mu

Workshop Group picks a theme, and artist animators work with children to create their own interpretations. The second portion of the Grants Pass showing celebrates AWG. This segment features 14 segments from 11 countries, each segment under 2 minutes. We are trying for a universal communication of ideas - without words– a challenge for adults, as well as for the kids, most of whom are just learning animation! Some workshops worked as a group on one concept, or kids worked independently doing variations on a theme, or sometimes maybe just playing around! It's free spirit art!

And touching to me – films from children living in war countries – Russia, Ukraine, and now Israel... OH! And the third segment was created nearby. Us at Pacifica! Felting artist Corbin Brashear worked with me and kids to animate the theme of ocean garbage.

South Korea - Nelson Shin

Yr hmbl typst received this note from Nelson Shin, ASIFA Korea President



I'm pleased to inform that we successfully wrapped up the 12th IAD event of ASIFA Korea at the NelsonSHIN Animation Art Center from 27 to 28 October. Including two films from ASIFA Central, we selected 39 films from Australia, China, Iran, India, Poland and ASIFA South and divided them into two programs of about 90 minutes each.

We coupled the showings with exhibitions in the animation museum that lasted the entire day. Students, professors, and other professionals in the field came and watch the movies.

We created a catalog to introduce each film and creator to the audience.

Once again, I appreciate your kind cooperation and creative achievement that made our screening so striking, and I look forward to seeing your originality and creativity in other films for the next IAD!

The gracious Mr. Shin, ever the gentleman, exemplifies a fine example of the benefits of international interactions and communication. He generously included yr hmbl typst among his beautiful IAD films and even tolerated my attempts at creating an SRT file for his translation team in Korea (I failed miserably, but he took it in great humor, and the efforts led to the how-to note that appears later in this rambling epistle for the season). It was an interaction that I'll embrace among my scattered memories, joining those with others in ASIFA, here and around this world. It gives me hope for humanity. I will claw my way to such hope, happiness, and solace. The catalog he created for his showing is also beautiful, and his animation/film-history museum is among my international travel destinations, should the opportunity ever arise.

We had a profile on his amazing museum in an earlier piece by ASIFA SF editor Karl Cohen this year. Here's a link to the ASIFA profile on the museum: https://asifa.net/an-animation-museum-in-korea/

ASIFA India - Awards of Excellence in Hyderabad

International Animation Day 2023 was celebrated in Hyderabad during November with plans to repeat the experience on December 1 in Bengaluru. Hyderabad's grand event also marked the presentation of the Annual Awards of Excellence. The international global footprint of ASIFA includes representation from over 42 countries with a presence in more than 70. Here's a taste of their celebration:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyKJeCKrrA0

At ASIFA - Poland

Their animation program and O!PLA (#11) Reel had a dozen national showings, with another seven internationally. Their selections from the IAD 2023 FilmFreeway library included:

APART (Australia 2021, 03:56), Alex Weight, UTS Animal Logic Academy
DONKS (Australia 2023, 06:36), re¿. Felix Colgrave
ELEGY OF ELEPHANT (China 2022, 08:29), Lu Sijie, Communication Univerity of China
FLUTE SOLO - IN SFUMATOSCOPE (USA 2023, 03:04), Jim Middleton, USA Central
FORTUNE COOKIE (Taiwan 2023, 03:50), Fu Yang
LETTER FROM A STRANGER (Iran 2023, 05:49), Shima Markazi Omidvar, University of Tehran
MADE OF MANY PARTS (USA 2022, 02:21), re¿. Grace Burns, School of Art, Humanities, and Technology, The University of Texas at Dallas
MEAL ON THE PLATE (China 2021, 06:54), Chenglin Xie
MORNING GLORY (China 2022, 10:26), Wang Shiheng, Communication Univerity of China
RED FIRE (Iran 2021, 11:00), Mona A.Shahi
THE DREAM OF 2008 (China 2022, 05:36), Hongyu Zhao, Xiamen Academy of Arts and Design, Fuzhou University
THE PIONEERS (Canada 2021, 09:40), Simon Cottee
THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASSES (USA 2022, 04:25), Morgan L Eng , Savannah College of Art and Design
VOICENOTE TO MY MOTHER (India 2023, 08:38), Jashan Sehmi, Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication
WAY HOME (China 2022, 09:34), Lu Dirong, School of Visual Arts Design, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts
WHITE HORSE (China, 2022, 07:15), Ruixuan Sun
WINTRY MIX (USA 2023, 06:52), Christine Veras, Philip Martin

And by "Almost All" Yr Hmbl Typst Means This: Ongoing Repression of Women in Iran

Making local attendees aware that the distance between Warsaw (at peace) and Kiev (at war) is the same as between Edmore and Nashville, TN, was intended to provide perspective that places on this world don't have the luxury of distance from external threats to freedoms we take for granted, and that concerned animators are being silenced, among other voices around the world. If that animator happens to be a woman, the pressure can easily be doubled.

Fatemeh Hosseini-Shakib, PhD in Animation studies at Tehran Art University, and representing ASIFA Iran to the world, sent the following message in October as we were assembling our IAD program: *I really appreciate your supportive words and your kind message. We would emerge stronger and wiser, I hope, after the storm. Hope to meet up again in a more peaceful world.*

It came at the end of a protracted string of emails, so tracing backwards, amid words of support, messages of concern, and frustration at the inability to create effective assistance, I read that:

As the ASIFA Iran's representative I am very happy to follow the string of emails and dynamic interactions regarding the ASIFA Prize 2023.

Unfortunately ASIFA Iran has not been very active during late 2022 and most of 2023 due to the Woman, Life, Freedom movement and all that followed. And except for myself, we did not have any international membership renewals from our local members, which means we cannot vote for this year's round.

This is just a friendly note to send my regards and respect for all you do, and my hope to once again join the vibrant activities of ASIFA International, including becoming once again an active chapter with international members for 2024 and later.

As for IAD, we are having a get together on Friday afternoon of 27th of October, with screenings in a cultural venue. Not very many people have participated in IAD exchange programme, but we hope to be able to select a list of films shared on Film Freeway for our screenings, and for that we thank all other chapters who kindly shared their members' films.

Also, I thought perhaps I need to explain that I have left my academic job in the University of Art, or to be precise, I was fired after 14 years of service. In recent years there has been a silent but systematic (political) scheme of replacing independent (non-obedient) lecturers and scholars, and I am, humbly one of them. I was gradually sent off my position by being denied a permanent contract (keeping me in a never- ending tenure track) and not letting me 'upgrade' to associate professor and later stages of the scientific ladder despite my good record. The last year's political upheaval and our little raised voice in social media was not tolerated and the best excuse for them to get rid of me and some of my very learned collogues in other departments.

Although it seems a personal matter, I believe that the international animation community needs to know about this. I know that you are not familiar with how things work in countries such as mine, and without any intention to victimize ourselves, I felt I must inform you of the whole story in a very abridged version.

As a small but hopeful and productive community we have enjoyed to be part of ASIFA International and have tried to be active and interactive in many ways and capacities and would love to continue to do so. But there are some hick-ups and burdens on our road to consistently being present and active. We are proud of our ASIFA Iran legacy founded by Dr. Zarrinkelk, and would fight to keep it and make it better.

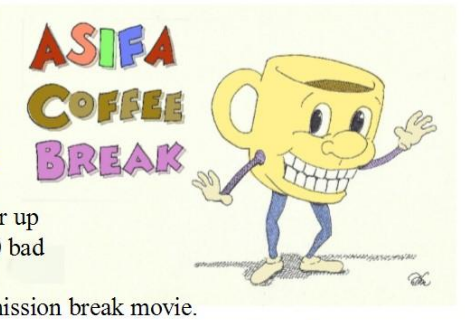
Best to all of you, Fatemeh

President Deanna Morse has reached out to Fatemeh, as have many others in ASIFA, offering what meager support is possible from a membership that is designed to be neutral, but even as such, cannot remain mute to the suppression and systematic erosion of one's creative voice. It is a reminder for us at home to guard against any similar home-grown, encroaching suppression, as some would have us become a reflection of autocratic, theocratic regimes abroad. Sinclair Lewis warned of its evils in *It Can't Happen Here* in 1935. Like *1984* and *A Handmaid's Tale*, it rang an alarm to refrain from myopia against a pernicious dystopia, or at least the fate of our dear Fatemeh.

From Mona Shahi's *Red Fire* (2023)

Notes from October-December 2023

Links, Blinks, Winks and Other Topics of Interest



From our Iowan reporter, David Thrasher, these two website links:
Rotoscoping as a teaching technique https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Y6Kkrlvzgs
The notion here is that studying existing film and recorded movements, and training yourself to visualize your projects from what you have sketched, you can further limber up your right brain when animating. Chuck Jones once said, "We all have about 250,000 bad drawings in us." Animation is one way to work those out of the system.
David is also working up a version of "Let's Go Out to the Lobby," the essential intermission break movie.

Another site has a nice description of various animation techniques, styles, and history, which is a good way to explain, essentially, that everything we see in the known megaverse (and some quantum equivalents) is *animated!!!!*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmyRZR8MaJI

Other coffees presented other exercises:
https://youtube.com/watch?v=m_D0xCk7Aq8
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JRFa33piKo

The California Institute of the Arts has distinguished alumni who frolic amid productions at Pixar and insert references to their alma mater and their inspirational classroom, A113:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A113
Dante Zaballa also has some quick and playful rotoscopes online. He calls them SNIPS:
https://vimeo.com/657433346

Carlos E Rosas graciously reminded us of the Happy Valley Animation Festival, with NO entry fee, accessible via FilmFreeway https://happyvalleyanimationfestival.org - and if you have questions about HVAF, here is Carlos' email - cer10@psu.edu
His brother, Eddie, has been around, too - you may recognize some of *his* projects, just maybe:
https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0741081/

New ASIFA member Vivi provided us with color theory graphics -

And, during the December coffee break, we went absolutely *Bonkers* with linkages.
Tracy Miller-Robbins found this walk cycle presentation. She's also reworking her "free festival" website:
https://www.home.pictoplasma.com/news/call-for-entries-walkwithcharacter

More sites seeking submissions -
Loop de loop - https://www.loopdeloop.org/ and
https://www.facebook.com/maltadult/

Michael Long wanted to let us know about *Once Within a Time* with shorts by Jess Pierce and Matt Amato coming to Webster University on December 21 (better get this newsletter out FAST!)
https://events.webster.edu/event/once_within_a_time?utm_campaign=widget&utm_medium=widget&utm_source=Webster+University%3A+Worldwide+Events

Robot Dreams - Japanese Benshi - a time when stage performers would describe and narrate silent films
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benshi

Here is a 40 min documentary, not animated, but moving. It's called *The Last Repair Shop*. A shop that maintains over 80,000 musical instruments in LA. Oh my shoulders! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xttrkgKXtZ4

Ed Fella - his mountainous collection of sketchbooks. My hands cramp just opening the page:
https://www.unframed.lacma.org/2017/10/12/words-and-drawings-sketchbooks-ed-fella

And President Deanna found time during recuperation to check out some movies. From the director of *Loving Vincent* , a feature rendered to look like oil painted animation.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFtfLsmhsNM

(And, by the way, there's an opening at Bowling Green University for an animation instructor - schmear the news! Start date, August 2024 -https://academiccareers.com/job/93367/assistant-professor-digital-arts/)

Continuing Education Department - Building an SRT file - Fire Up That Keyboard!

- OR -

"Oh how yr hmbl typst loves to type!"

An SRT file (SubRip Subtitle file) is a commonly used file format for storing subtitles or captions that can be displayed simultaneously with a video, including MP4 files. The SRT files are text-based subtitles that identify the timing information (timestamps) and the corresponding dialogue or captions for each segment of the video. These subtitles are typically used for various purposes, such as providing translations, closed captions for the deaf or hard of hearing, or simply making the video content more accessible to a wider audience. Many festivals are now requesting them on FilmFreeway, especially those in non-English speaking areas of the world, which, surprise of surprises, is most of the planet.

The "trick" is in naming the file to match exactly with the video file name, and then giving that file a suffix of ".srt" Word processing software often "helps" with the suffix by automatically assigning it as a ".doc," ".docx," or ".wpd." As a result, yr humbl typst made use of the basic, prehistoric "notepad" in Windows, something that harkens back to the days of manually writing out html files for early websites. Yep. Notepad. Yep. There are reasons I keep my typewriters. Next I should probably unearth the morse code transmitter from my Boy Scout days.

There are other "simultaneously file" formats, but SRT is apparently the *least* complicated and most widely supported format, making it a popular choice. One shudders at the alternatives.

An example of an SRT file name typically follows a specific naming convention to ensure it is associated with a particular video file. The convention usually involves using the same base name as the video file and adding ".srt" as the file extension.

Suppose you have a video file named "Keaton.mp4." In that case, the corresponding SRT subtitle file would typically be named something like "Keaton.srt." I haven't dared to experiment, but it would seem to be a good idea to be case-sensitive aware, and use "_" for spacing.

Here's the pairing:

Video file: Keaton.mp4

SRT subtitle file: Keaton.srt

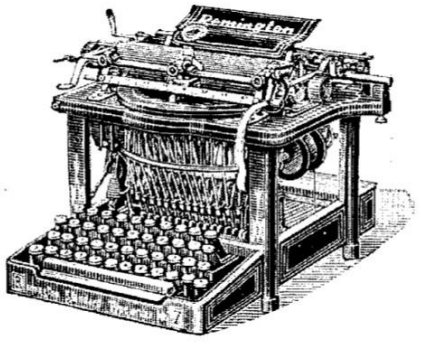
By naming the SRT file in this way, video players and software can easily recognize the relationship between the video and its subtitles, making it convenient to display the subtitles when playing the video. Evidently, digital players (Windows Media Player, VLC media player were the ones I tried this on) see both files, begin playing the mp4, and then take the paired name srt file and run it as a program.

Here's how an SRT file typically looks. You start with the name of the mp4 masterpiece, example_film, or here, Keaton. Don't start the page with anything else, don't get fancy, just type information in according to the format.

Keaton

1
00:00:05,000 --> 00:00:10,000
This is the first subtitle.

2
00:00:15,000 --> 00:00:20,000
And this is the second subtitle.



In the example above:

Each subtitle block begins with a number, indicating the order of the subtitle.

The next line contains the timing information, with the start and end timestamps. Note the use of a comma instead of a period, to indicate the time stamp. Très European. The first 00 is the hours, the second 00 is for the minutes, and the last 00 is for the seconds. If it starts at 5 ½ seconds, therefore, you would have it 00:00:05,500

The lines after that contain the actual subtitle text. Lightning strikes! Evil, ominous music! Let's Go Out to the Lobby! Boycott Grapes!!

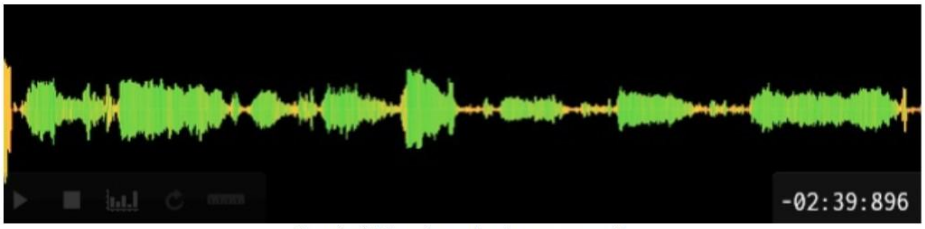
This means you have to go through your film, stopwatch in hand, to document the start/stop range for the subtitle, and then write down what you want it to say. I hope you *really, REALLY* like your film.

Now once all done with this, when you have an MP4 video and an SRT subtitle file with the same filename (except for the file extension), many video players and platforms will automatically display the subtitles when you play the video. This synchronization between the video and the SRT file allows viewers to read the subtitles at the appropriate times during the video playback. It also works for telling the viewer other goodies on the soundtrack.

The value of this for international showings is that an SRT file can be given over to committee assistants ("interns") who can then rewrite the data for the particular language of the attending audience.

Public Domain Update - WOO HOO! We've Got NOISES!!

Hollywood Sound Effects Libraries Are Now Remastered and Available on the Internet Archive



Sound of "Crowd reaction in a courtroom"

These sound libraries come from three collections, in 180 file batches, that had previously been in the USC HMH Foundation Moving Image Archive: https://archive.org/details/usc-sound-effect-archive

The Gold and Red Libraries (Gold effects start with "G", Red with "R") consist of high-quality, *first generation copies of original nitrate optical sound effects from the 1930s & '40s created for Hollywood studios*. They were collected by a prominent sound editor who worked in the industry for 44 years. The fragile optical elements were donated to USC, and transferred to tape by USC Cinema students in the early 1970s. *The files are in the Public Domain.*

The archive wants to remind users that the files have been digitized for preservation, but they have not been restored: "You may want to use some noise reduction. Or you may embrace the noise of history." (They're being very humble here - each file sounds incredible, but they do pre-date the stereophonic theatrical experience.)

Read more about the Gold Library: https://blog.freesound.org/?p=901
Read more about the Red Library: https://blog.freesound.org/?p=1064

The Sunset Editorial (SSE) Library was also donated to USC around 1990. It includes classic effects from the 1930s into the '80s. These effects are from 35mm magnetic film. They were often several generations removed from the originals, and not as clean, so some careful restoration was done to make them more useful. SSE effects start with "S"

Read more about the Sunset Editorial Library: https://blog.freesound.org/?p=1515/
Example - "Machines" - https://archive.org/details/Red_Library_Machines_1

"Free" isn't necessarily "pretty," but I don't have a reel-to-reel player anymore, either!

In addition to this news, the UCSB library of cylinder and Edison recordings has tossed all of its digitized material into the public domain, and since 2022, is making them available to download and use for any purpose, without paying a fee. Again, some of the tunes aren't exactly toe-tappers, but occasionally a very nice bit of wax appears from 1915 with oh-so-much potential! (And it's FREE FREE FREE)

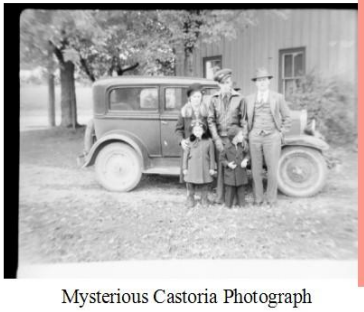
https://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu/

The Animated Adventures of Gary Schwartz, CPA
(Certified Public Animator)

The Perpetually Mobile Gary Schwartz, technically a resident of Detroit, Michigan, takes to the skies, the roads, any path less traveled, to sow seeds of animation with breathless panache. He's feeding horses in Motown one minute, then to Romania the next, finding fun in history, and history in fun. Here are a few images to prove he can stay still long enough for them to be documented for posterity...or at least until next Tuesday. Remember - life is uncertain, so eat dessert first. Heeeeerrrrr's ***GARY!***

Fount Leroy's Forgotten Family Photos Project

The Musty Basement Project - November 2023


Mysterious Castoria Photograph

Close analog cameras tightly to prevent radiation leakage from the Rouge River messing up the image

Negative, but no negative energy allowed

See? There were horses, after all!

The moral of the story is - if you have to ask what it all means, you'll never understand. Just ride the wave and say wheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) Nov-Dec, 2023, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account:
https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.

Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!

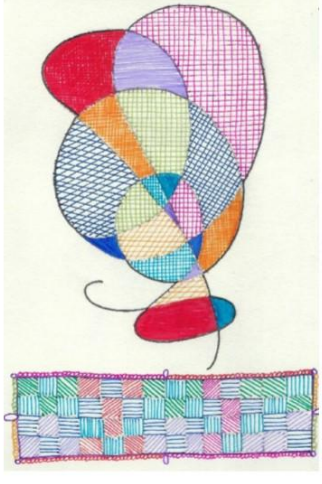
Information You Just Can't Live Without Department
ASIFA Website Stats - 2023

Month	Views	Visitors
Jan	106	59
Feb	106	54
Mar	177	98
Apr	164	70
May	209	99
Jun	186	108
Jul	186	134
Aug	470	224
Sep	340	223
Oct	418	249
Nov	350	205
Dec (est)	302	228

B U T W A I T ! T H E R E ' S M O R E ! ! !

Appendices to the Nov-Dec 2023 Edition of the ASIFA Central Newsletter follow.

Meet the Newbies! (Yr Hmbl Typst posed some frequently silly and superficial questions and received some deep, purposeful responses, that put extra Hmbl in his moniker.)
Chuck Wilson Explores the DIA!!
The SAS Ponders - What Is Animation? Get your dictionary ready!



Getting to Know Ourselves - Three New Members

Peaches Wilczak - Vivi Markatos - Shweta Marathe

Their Replies to the Infamous 20 Questions!

Peaches Wilczak

I have no idea which of the many animated features that permeated my childhood could be the very first one I watched, I essentially only watched animation as a youngster to the point where live action films completely disinterested me. Which is still a little true to this day...

Films I distinctly remember watching as a child and still hold dear to this day are The Last Unicorn, The Secret of NIHM, All Dogs go to Heaven, and basically all of the Studio Ghibli films. I'm lucky that my parents were big fans of fantasy.

I'm also lucky to have gone to a relatively large high school with plenty of electives, including a digital media program. My first experience with animation involved drawing images in Photoshop and compiling them in Premiere. After taking enough classes you could essentially choose your own assignments to work on and that gave me the chance to get some practice.

Now that I'm out of college, it's strange to have once again returned to a point where I don't have endless resources at my disposal. My studio space is gone so it's harder to work with physical material, I've found myself returning to my roots and working digitally. I don't have school paid fancy programs anymore but there are plenty of good free ones out there such as OpenToonz, DaVinci Resolve, and Krita, it just requires me to learn each program to regain the confidence I had before with all the expensive ones.

I do love animation, and the arts in general; I'll probably feel the drive to create for the rest of my life, but whether I incorporate it into my career for now is uncertain. I used to have high aspirations of living in a big city and founding my own studio, but I've found that studio life might not be the best for me, and my girlfriend isn't ready to move out from our home town, so I've been exploring other avenues. Lucky for me, while in college I recently discovered a new passion from history, and while I didn't have a whole lot of time to devote to it then, I've begun studying in my own time and volunteering at the local museum. It's been fulfilling to open my life up to both art and history, though that's just another option I've been exploring, and I'm still making progress at creating a career for myself as a freelance artist.

Whether freelance works out or not, I'll still always be animating, and I hope to continue creating art that inspires others to learn and think.

Vivi Markatos

When was your first experience watching an animated film?
I think I was about 4 years old, and I was watching the anime Umi no Triton dubbed for Greek television. I really liked the hero and his need to understand his past, and especially the way he defended his friends and his power, despite his size and age. In Greece there wasn't -and isn't- an established animation industry, but many are working at it independently. A lot of the kid's shows were imported and dubbed from across the world. I was always interested in all sorts of animations, but Umi no Triton was the one who made me think"oh, I want to do that." I told my father while he was fixing an outlet that I wanted to be an artist (because, of course, four-year-olds didn't know it was called animator). My parents didn't disapprove at the beginning. They saw me drawing all the time, and watching cartoons , thinking this could just become a nice hobby for young Vivi. But I remaind passionate about it. There was bullying at school for being weird and 'childish," drawing everywhere I went and not 'interacting" with the other kids. So, I kept nice company with the characters and stories I created. At 12, I started collecting and alternating some drawings in my PC and in Paint. Then, I discovered there was a software called Movie Maker, and I was so excited to make my first animation at age 13!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pMiX3PrZ7g

My father wanted me to be a journalist, so I did work at a radio station, recordings spots for clients, being a radio presenter (even winning recognition at age 17, the first place for a cultural tribute to the international year of astronomy, under the auspices of UNESCO). I was also winning a lot of panhellenic drawing competitions. I covered some important news in my area (Delphi) where we were then living, and also went twice to the European parliament in Strasburg . With a bunch of other journalists, we were picked by a Greek politician to attend a dinner in order to write about him for the media and tell everyone how important his

position was for our country (not!). We ended up eating in one of the most expensive restaurants in Strasburg, with everything paid by his party (meaning, really, the money of the Greek people). I witnessed the face of corruption, with a lot of under-table favours and free business trips for personal reasons, which I absolutely hated. This wasn't my dream nor the lifestyle I wanted. I wanted to draw, and I wanted my audience to be the kids. Meanwhile I was finishing my degree in Theatre, which was not well received by my parents, while studying graphics in college and working at nights as a DJ to pay my expenses. I was completely drained, exhausted, and became quite ill. After graduating, I applied in the UK, to one University, to study animation. They said I had a strong portfolio, and to my complete delight, was quickly accepted, and finally felt on the right path, leaving everything behind to follow my dream. I had about 100 euros, a broken laptop, no duvets, ripped shoes and a borrowed phone. But it was a relief to finally be myself and become what my four-year-old self always wanted to be a successful and recognized artist among Greek speaking audiences, with many best-selling books and more than 100 books illustrated. I've completed three films, am finalizing a fourth, and am working on the fifth. I have also been nominated twice by the Hellenic Film Academy for best Animated Film and once at the Cannes World Film Festival. My parents, now divorced, finally accept what I do. My mom is a nurse in Athens. We two speak often now, and we understand each other much better. My father still wants me to come back to Greece, work in the family business, and settle for 'stable work and income. No thank you! At last, I am more than ok - I am Vivi!

What were your resources at the time?
I had very few resources, but I had a lot of videotapes at home, where I could watch films and study them. After an award from an Athens comic competition, and my years studying theatre, I returned to the capital of Greece were I made some friends. A very good friend I met at the competition gave me some software and also some books to study, and encouraged me to keep going. He was also a fellow artist. He suggested work in publishing by creating children books because my style was vivid and cute. I followed his suggestion because I had no one to guide me around, and because he was one of the first people, along with my grandmother, who believed in me and my art. Thanks to him and his advice I was 'saved" and successful. Thank you, Paris Charalampides, for being a great friend and human!

How did you find your first training? By books? School? Special animation-based academy?
I was self-learned almost all of the time. Sporadically some books I was having, and then visiting public libraries. Animation I did only one year at my masters in the UK, where all the courses where 3d based, which wasn't my strong suit. I kept doing my own thing. I was almost failing my course, failing also in the English language and had to take extra lessons in English by a tutor in Uni in order not to fail. I managed within a year from 42% to go to 72% and I was selected as valedictorian for the masters' of my year.

Who was the first animator or studio you remember making an impression?
Studio Ghibli. When I watched Spirited Away in Theatres. I was so fascinated, I was 13-14 years old and this fanned my flame for animation. I was quite the cinephile.

What is the first animated film you watched more than once?
Good question. If it wasn't for my sister it would be the Huncchback of Notre Dame. I felt exactly the same, a lot like Quasimodo being stuck to a prison to fit in society's expectations. I loved Esmeralda, because she was this free-spirted person who lived as an outcast but being happy as she was barefoot but proud, strong, female and surviving and doing fine by herself. No prince to her rescue, fighting for the right cause against power-hungry Frolo. I have to admit I haven't read the book but I want to do so!

Animation, and creating animation, is a school itself. I sometimes like animating straight ahead. There is an unexpected factor that can change your plans , and it helps you find new ways of interpreting something in the dialog or even a movement in the character. I find it very rewarding. Tiring, sometimes crushing, but I love it. I think even if I got a job in the animation industry , I would still like to go back and do my own thing, tell my own story. I ve been working almost ten years making children books and illustrating the stories of others and although I have worked in a lot of interesting projects, bringing your own baby to life is something unparalleled. I do want to tell my own stories; I feel I have so many things to say and so many experiences to share.

If you couldn't be an animator, what career would you follow?
I don't know. There is nothing else out there that I could actually fit in. All the other things seem taken right now, and this is the only place I feel actually I can offer something or try to be good, because I love it and I want to.

And now, the most important question of all, as you hail from Greece - For whom was Plato was making an apology?

(Oh my!) So the only thing I could offer to this question is an interpretation. Plato through Socrates and vice versa talked about idealism. For Plato Socrates was an ideal man, who supported his beliefs and, despite the punishment of death, he talked with pride towards his audience about life, ethics and freedom. Although Socrates was a powerful man, and feared by many for his influence on the youth of Athens, he didn't used this power to ask for freedom from his death sentence. The fate of Socrates was 'prescribed." He accepted it, and his last wish was that future youth would fight against what was unfair and corrupted to believe and support the good will as a way of life. What Socrates and

Plato say is, even if by trying to get rid of the wisest man in Athens, there will still be people who can see unfairness, who see the wrong, andwill speak out and demonstrate, not just agree with the a system that is built to serve the few for their benefit. For Plato, the ideal society would be led by a philosopher, a philosopher who could see the whole picture, and serve everyone with equality and fairness. For Plato, Socrates was a philosopher who had all the attributes to be his ideal leader. But for this reason, and because people are greedy of power, they satisfy their ego and perform works of evil. The Apology of Socrates could be the acclamation of 'a good man," a good citizen, and a philosopher. A person who recognises his mortality and his impact on life with morality and humility these are the virtues of life that a good man can have. Socrates, by his death, became an emblematic persona for so many generations, and a philosopher whom we still remember and revere.

◡

Shweta Marathe

When was your first experience watching an animated film?
My first experience watching a film in a theatre was when I was in my mom's tummy. Haha! so I can't say for sure! ⌋
But, I was surprised and fascinated by the medium of animation when I was in seventh / eighth grade, watching some hand-drawn Oscar nominated animated short films on my laptop. I was amazed by how these drawings could evoke strong emotions in such a short duration, simple drawings creating the illusion of life, suspension of disbelief, the fluidity of the medium - the extensive freedom to create anything out of nothing it was pure magic!

If you remember the film, what was it?
I cannot pinpoint on one, but The Man Who Planted Trees (1987), The Old Man and the Sea (1999), Father and Daughter (2000) were among the first animated short films I saw at that time.
I must have seen The Lion King (1994), Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron (2002) and Finding Nemo (2003). But I was too young to understand how these films were made when I saw them. I did not quite differentiate these films from Live Action Features.
They made me feel like I could tell stories through this medium. I was fascinated by the different styles in which things could be animated (almost every animated short film I saw was a completely different style, like Aleksandr Petrov was using slow-drying oil paints for animation - I used to oil paint during my seventh, eighth ninth grade vacations), the infinite possibilities of movement, and the freedom of imagination in storytelling.

When did you first think about making an animated film?
I was in the foundation year at the National Institute of Design (NID) when I first made my first animated short film. We had not been formally introduced to animation yet. I had read the book The Illusion of Life by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, and watched many animated shorts and their making of videos (also, I had switched from Engineering to Design to pursue what I'm interested in - Haha! I guess I had lost my patience to wait), so I came up with a short narrative with a simple character, made a plan and started animating on weekends and after midnight during the weekdays. (I'm very grateful to my roommate for allowing me to keep the lights on.) And later, I absorbed every animation book I could find in the college library, and watched many animated shorts and their behind-the-scenes videos. I had binge-watched almost all the Oscar-nominated animated short films since 1932, and independent animated films available online.

Aleksandr Petrov, Glen Keane, and Michaël Dudok de Wit were among my first inspirations.

Making an animated short film came first because I had been interested in drawing and art from a very young age, so the medium of animation felt more intuitive. (My sister shot a video when I was five years old on our old Camcorder of me drawing a pink sunflower.)

However, after studying Narrative Design, I like to think of filmmaking as an audio-visual medium combining moving images and sound, both mediums being part of Cinema. But, Animation will always be closer to my heart because I stumbled upon it first and fell in love.

Like most people in India, I usually watch Animated films (far less in number than Live Action films) in the theatre with friends or family (if they are interested). After the pandemic, I started going to the theatre more often, and also by myself.

What is the first animated film you watched more than once?
Wow, that's a difficult question - I have watched many animated short films more than once. (Because I like to rewatch with my friends and family and watch them react). Anna & Bella (1984) and Father and Daughter (2000) surprise me every time I rewatch.

During my first time teaching Screenwriting at a design Institute as a guest faculty, I was screening many animated short films on the projector, a student requested to replay the film Father and Daughter (2000). That was the first time I watched a film immediately after it ended - it was an intriguing experience - because the film has a Cyclic motif.

What medium did you first explore - drawing frame by frame, molding clay, stop motion, flip books?
The first time I animated was frame by frame and flipping pages - like traditional animation (while practicing to animate for my first animated short film). But then I animated the film with straight-ahead animation with soft pastels on black chart paper, erasing the previous frames to leave a trail of erased chalk drawings behind. After that, I also tried my hands at stop motion with different materials. While animating a picture book, I used hair gel to animate water droplets falling into the tub which then dance like ballerinas. I had a lot of fun exploring that medium.

Frame from "Swim"

.

Sharing link to that video here - Timestamp: 2:30 - 2:40 - https://vimeo.com/382612557

What medium do you prefer now?
The medium depends on the project, but I usually prefer hand-drawn animation on a computer, especially if the scene is complex and requires many layers or if the film is longer in duration.

What software did you first use?
During my first animation project the animation was done on paper, and photos of each frame were clicked on a camera. Later the images transferred onto the computer, lined up, edited, and color corrected on Adobe Premiere Pro.

What formal training have you found most beneficial?
Design modules at NID, such as Color Theory, Elements of Composition, Space Form and Structure, Narrative Design, Screenwriting, Visual Scripting, and Sound Design, formed an essential foundation for animation and filmmaking, and encouraged further explorations.

Does your school coordinate festival showings of student work? How are they programmed?
Our Institute did not coordinate festival showings of student work, I had submitted my first animated short film on my own when a friend of friend from another design Institute had suggested that I send if to TISDC (a student festival in Taiwan).

But, NID has its own International Student Festival - Chitrakatha (since 2007) which happens every alternate year, and is an exciting experience to host, connect and celebrate with students and designers from around the world.

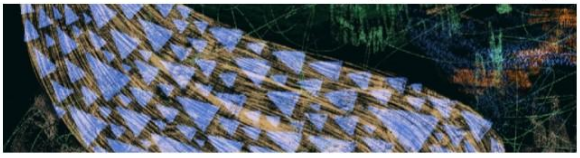
Is animation a field you find personally rewarding? If you couldn't get "a job" in animation, would you still do it on your own?
Yes, I find animation (and filmmaking as a whole) very rewarding! I love telling stories through this medium, and that's what I enjoy the most. Yes! I would certainly continue to do it on my own (In fact I don't think I want to get a job in animation, but rather make independent projects whenever I'm inspired to tell a story).

If you couldn't be an animator, what career would you follow?
I'm passionate about storytelling, so apart from being an Animator/ Animation Film Director, I have tried different roles such as Design Educator, Comic Book Author, Visual Communication Designer, Screenwriter, Editor and Assistant Director (and I enjoyed all of them, but animation has its own charm). So I would choose any other career which allows me to tell stories or help others tell their stories.

Could you incorporate animation into that career?
Yes, I would have tried to incorporate it into any career I would be doing, as I see it as a medium of expression and storytelling.

I believe it's never too late to do what you really love. There is always time.

And now, perhaps the most important question of all - how hot do you like your chutney?
VERY HOT!! Haha!! But certainly Not on a hot day.



And the Infamous 20 Questions:

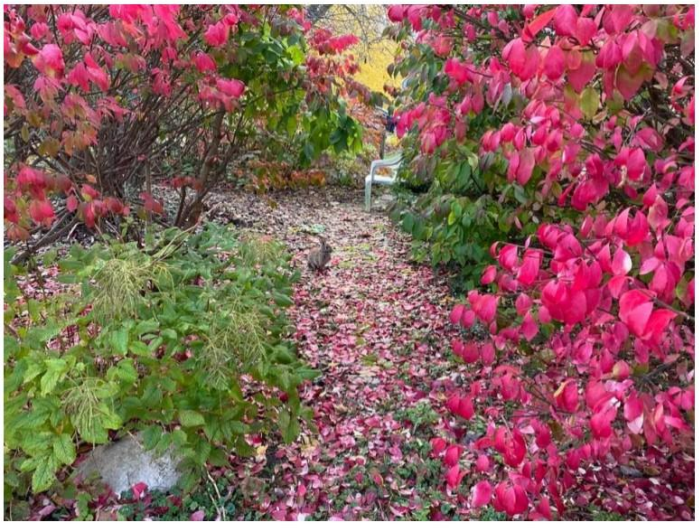
1. When was your first experience watching an animated film?
2. If you remember the film, what was it?
3. Do you remember the impression it made? Were you just entertained, drawn in by the character, attracted by the sound, style, color?
4. When did you first think about making an animated film?
5. Which came first - making a film or making an animated film?
6. What were your resources at the time?
7. How did you find your first training? By books? School? Special animation-based academy?
8. Who was the first animator or studio you remember making an impression?
9. What is the theatrical experience of watching an animated film in your country? Family? Going with friends? Going on your own?
10. What is the first animated film you watched more than once?
11. Why?
12. What medium did you first explore - drawing frame by frame, molding clay, stop motion, flip books?
13. What medium do you prefer now?
14. What software did you first use?
15. What formal training have you found most beneficial?
16. Does your school coordinate festival showings of student work? How are they programmed?
17. Is animation a field you find personally rewarding? If you couldn't get "a job" in animation, would you still do it on your own?
18. If you couldn't be an animator, what career would you follow?
19. Could you incorporate animation into that career?
20. Twenty is the meatloaf question, varying with the interviewee.

Animated Events: An Afternoon at the DIA

Chuck Wilson's Perambulations Around Motown

(Original posting - 31 October 2023)

http://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com/



It was October. The leaves were red, orange, and gold here in Michigan.

I had handed out midterms on Friday and they started to drift in -- a number of my more diligent students finished and turned in the exam the very next day. But as we headed into the holiday season, I knew that time was going to be more precious than ever. Grading forty-three midterms, followed by grading two separate writing assignments in November and a third quiz-based assignment in December, followed by the final exam and submitting course grades lay ahead of me. Then there was International Animation Day, the Grand Rapids Comicon, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and finally, my birthday on New Year's Eve.

I had to face the very real fact that I wouldn't get to visit the Detroit Institute of Arts until January. Not being able to visit an art museum isn't a Greek tragedy in the grand scheme of life. But considering how much I work during the week, I do enjoy getting away from it all for an afternoon of solitude, a little exercise, and some artistic inspiration. Recharges the internal batteries and all that.

So, with the weekend open, a friend and I drove down to Detroit for a good lunch and an afternoon of cultural enrichment. After we finished up at the DIA Café, Jon and I went our separate ways. He wanted to visit the DIA's library and do some research. I wanted to drift and look at some familiar pieces of art--see what was still there and what had been changed since my last visit. I was not disappointed.

Hanuman, early 1900's
Unknown artist

The first stop was the "hall of puppetry". The exhibit had been swapped out since my last visit. Some of the puppets I had seen before, but this

time there was an interesting note in one of the placards dealing with the puppeteer making a puppet transition from one size to another during the performance and it explained a little technique. When I think about how Lotte Reiniger made transitions in direction or movement on the z-plane, how the Indian puppeteers handled the same issue was very thought provoking. Worth some further research... and testing... and I wondered how I could integrate that information into my lecture on the history of puppets... or the assignment on Lotte Reiniger.

Then it was off to the "hall of Chinese paintings". There's just something about observing the complexity of the simple designs seen in both the layout and the brush strokes combined with a skillful use of the 'white of the paper' that I find so appealing. I once heard that during Mao's "Cultural Revolution" the communists tried to destroy China's history. How many priceless works of art and literature that represent the great history of the Chinese people are gone forever? Course, for that matter, how many were destroyed during World War II? Or when Rome fell... or Constantinople...?

Painting from an Album of Landscapes
after Old Masters, 1619
Shen Shichong

Fruit Piece, 1849
Robert Seldon Duncanson

Having no plan in particular, nor any special exhibits to visit, I walked upstairs and revisited some artwork that I'd seen many times before. This time though, feeling no rush to be anywhere or do anything, I sat there and tried to observe the paintings with new eyes and from different angles. My patience was rewarded as I noticed details in the paint/brushstrokes on the pineapple in Duncanson's "Fruit Piece", details meant to simulate light and shadow and reveal texture. Then there were the speckles on the strawberries, obviously meant to represent seeds--or the individual painted drupelets that made up the raspberries. So many small details that make up a greater whole.

Before I left the museum proper, I had to take some more photographs of the 'Veiled Lady'. Still breathtaking... not just the ability to make marble look transparent, but also the folds in the fabric and the detail on the woman's clothing.

The Veiled Lady, 1872
Giovanni Maria Benzoni

It really makes me wonder how long it took Giovanni Benzoni to learn and master the skills necessary to create such a statue.

The Veiled Lady, 1872
cloth detailing

Feeling a little tired by this point, I had a light dessert at the Kresge Court and did some reading. I've been jotting down notes about a fantasy setting that's been on my mind for the better part of five years--writing from the first-person perspective like Bram Stoker wrote Dracula, as if I was writing a travelogue of my experiences while I wander through a strange and wondrous land. I honestly don't think that it's something that I'd ever publish. It's more the act of creation and having something special for me to read and reread that I'm enjoying. A roommate of mine once wrote several novels in the time we lived together. They were all set in the universe of a game we played and from the perspective of the main character and the mercenary unit that my friend played. One day I asked him if he was ever going to submit them for publication, after all, he had been a playtester for the game, he knew the right people to talk to. But he said 'no'. Writing these stories was something that he did for himself. I didn't understand it then, but all these years later, I think I get it now. Sometimes the story is so personal that you want to keep it all to yourself rather than put it out there, be it published as official canon or as fan fiction. Jeff was right: sometimes it's all about 'creating art just for the sake of creating art'.

Mont Sainte-Victoire, ~1904-6
Paul Cezanne

Analytical and Articulatory Animation Analyses

An Appendix to ASIFA Central Newsletter Series - December 2023

Defining Animation

From a Series of Recent SAS Emails

Alex Dudok de Wit began the discussion:

What is animation? I'm looking first of all for definitions of the medium that you find convincing, and which are as up to date as possible, taking into account the latest technological developments. And secondly, I'd be keen to read anything that traces the evolution of how animation has been defined across the decades – things in the vein of this (but ideally more recent): http://www.denslow.com/articles/whatis.html

From Alan Cholodenko, University of Sydney

First, unlike the majority of those who write on animation, for me animation is not only an art. And it is not only the life and motion of a genre of film, of cinema, of film 'as such'. It is far more. It is *idea*, concept, process, performance, medium and milieu; and it invests all arts, media and communications (in other words, all arts, media and communications are forms of animation). It invests all sciences and technologies. It invests all disciplines, knowledge, fields, practices (including the history of ideas, the history of philosophy). It invests all relationships (of whatever kind: personal, social, national, sexual, etc.). It invests all life and movement, as it invests all thought. It invests not only the subject, it invests the world, the universe itself. That's why it is more than only a human practice. It is a process, performance, medium and milieu of world, of universe. What might be called the at once 'squash and stretch', elastic, plastic, animated – indeed *animatic* – nature of 'all.' It is not only the human that is at stake in animation, it is the world, the universe - everything what could be called reality 'as such.'

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From Andy Buchanan

I'm adding a link to a paper of mine specifically on questions relating to real-time animation. In this paper I don't attempt a definition exactly, but make a distinction between real-time and linear time animation based on philosophies of time.
The paper
https://intellectdiscover.com/docserver/fulltext/ta/16/1/tear.16.1.53_1.pdf?expires=1702432618&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=2F1273CE31DCCD39BE7A8065BB518BEF

◡

From Greg Langner

My research and practice, which is rooted in live/experimental theatre and dance, investigates the many myriad modes of performance and expressive technologies (and other prosthetics) that capture that quality and vibrancy of cartoon animation in both real-time and "real-space" at once. In other words, I study (and stage) how and why cartoons appear to come to life through phenomena of *cartoon corporeality*. As others have said, attending to the original question, as animation was born of many other mediums - not only preceding technologies like zoetropes and magic lanterns, but also much older forms of live performance like light/shadow puppet theatre – animation must be understood beyond its cinematic connotations.

Animation is an amalgamation of conceptual qualities exemplifying the fluidity, plasticity, and imaginative potential of human life. In that animation is inextricable from the physical actions that produce it, animation as both medium and process is inextricable from liveness. Applying Karen Barad's theory of *agential realism* helps in discussing the relationship between the animated and the physical, whereas Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of *dialogism* and the *carnivalesque* help clarify the relationship between animated subjects and human liveness. Happy to share the original study (also easy to search), though hopefully the published, shorter article version will be available in the near future.

◡

From Hugo Glover

As this fascinating thread has ricocheted into zoetropes I would like to add one to Jim's comprehensive tally - https://vimeo.com/354272015

This was the last of four institutions of this flame powered zoetrope for my PhD, in this case using twelve frames form Jankovics 1974 *Sisyphus* film.

I have sidestepped *defining* animation in preference to *understanding* animation through *making*. Action research - a cycle of planing, making and reflecting, was a useful method for me - so theory is always in conversation with practice. I found Kentridge's articulations of his studio practice (https://www.hup.harvard.edu/books/9780674365803)an entanglement of time, technology, embodiment and play) some of the most useful insights.

Interested to see what comes next.

◡

From Jim Le Fevre www.jimlefevre.com

Oooh, if it's real time animation then that's somewhere where I do a bit of stuff in.

I do a lot of things with the Phonotrope – https://www.jimlefevre.com/the-phonotrope , that relatively recent practise, that has connections with (previously mentioned) Gregory Barmsamian's https://gregorybarsamian.com/ zoetrope work and also Eric Dyer's https://www.ericdyer.com/ phenomenal experiments. Here's a couple of off-shoots that I did on the process -
Crafts Council
https://www.jimlefevre.com/crafts-council-phonotrope
and
SBTRKT
https://www.jimlefevre.com/sbtrkt-zoetrope.

It also makes for great workshops - https://vimeo.com/847896485 - with people who have little to no experience in animation.

There's a great audio visual duo called *Sculpture* https://plasticinfinite.com (Reuben Sutherland and Dan Hayhurst) whose events are totally about exploring and experimenting with that and burs the line of *where we stand* with relation to animation.

And, slightly tangentially to the zoetrope based things is the glorious Sam Meech, http://portfolio.smeech.co.uk/knit-rgb-synth/ who incorporates knitting machines to generate jacquard like frames as animation.

We all did a great evening at Flatpack around 2009
https://flatpackfestival.org.uk/past-festivals/flatpack-3
which was entirely a live event.

On the other side of the intersection of the Venn diagram of animation and real-time is Nic Rawling and his Paper Cinema http://thepapercinema.com/ which is slightly more rooted in illustration as performance as well as I recently stumbled across Kid Koala's performances
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFOImWFUL7k
both of which tip toe into theatre.

Finally there was a fun thing I developed called *Frames* https://www.jimlefevre.com/frames-interactive which tip toes into games a little bit, but is no less rooted in animation. Again, to me, it's about where the audience stands in relation to the presentation of animation.

I'm not 100% how helpful this is as I'm not putting forward any definitions but they might be interesting things to put into your pipe and smoke!

◡

From Suzanne Buchan suzanne.buchan@rca.ac.uk , Royal College of Art

Throwing in my two cents' worth there.

Denslow was writing when the digital paradigm shift was underway (flying cameras, labour concerns about vactors, etc). In the meantime CGI has attained the 'holy grail' of realistic digital perfection.

Most of Denslow's many questions can be answered with 'yes'. While I'm not a friend of dictionary definitions, the last phrase of his second sentence cited here is spot on, and refers to the artist/creator as much as the audience wanting to experience it:

*To turn to Webster again, compulsion is defined as: "an irresistible impulse to perform an irrational act." This could also serve as a definition of animation, *for what is animation if not the desire to make real that which exists in the imagination?*

When working with students or a wider public, I tend to rather prosaically propose there are two basic forms or modes of animation: the animation we are *supposed* to see (that most of a non-specialised public regard as *animation*) and the animation we are *not supposed to see* (viz Chirstopher Nolan's collapsing cities in *Inception*, etc).

A good article on concerns around the latter by an artist, and what it may do to our experience of nature, is Johnny Hardstaff's *The Impossibly Real – Greenbelting the Imaginary* (ANM 6.2 2011):
https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1746847707078279__;!!IBzWLUs!Q-4BmmSCA5V5WyMkJhmZ729lXWSy2pw5PyuhukPP_Gc7PD7aKr9lXDhfTCzv4KdILaM5j33yESZ1VakEwSak_8sK82fu29nQj9XWEgc$

In terms of what it is *not* (Denslow's reference to ASIFA's *not live action)*. I would insist that animation is NOT a medium, it is rather a form.

The reason should be obvious: in pre-digital cinema, it shares the photochemical medium of analog film stock, and now more often the digital artefacts of

digital image making (time-based or otherwise). Installations take the form even further, like Rose Bond's architectural installations, documentation of one here: https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://vimeo.com/45319050?login=true__;!!IBzWLUs!Q-4BmmSCA5V5WyMkJhmZ729lXWSy2pw5PyuhukPP_Gc7PD7aKr9lXDhfTCzv4KdILaM5j33yESZ1VakEwSak_8sK82fu29nQFoARxBY$

And extracinematic works like Gregory Barsamian's film-less stroboscopic sculptures: UjmRA://urldefense.com/v3/__https://gregorybarsamian.com/__;!!IBzWLUs!Q-4BmmSCA5V5WyMkJhmZ729lXWSy2pw5PyuhukPP_Gc7PD7aKr9lXDhfTCzv4KdILaM5j33yESZ1VakEwSak_8sK82fu29nQN6UJmRA$

And the technology behind it: https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1746847708096730__;!!IBzWLUs!Q-4BmmSCA5V5WyMkJhmZ729lXWSy2pw5PyuhukPP_Gc7PD7aKr9lXDhfTCzv4KdILaM5j33yESZ1VakEwSak_8sK82fu29nQ_SWgF2g$

Or Brand's MASSTRANSISCOPE take it into even more interesting non-cinematic, non-frame-by-frame, or non-screen-based expanded areas. And there are, of course, many more.

Some of the more interesting discussions - not attempts at definitions, which I regard as unproductive - are found in Edwin Carel's writings and curatorial projects:

[T]he development of animation as an artistic practice actually precedes the cinema by at least three centuries, starting with the magic lantern. From its origins, animation can be understood both as a method (a technology) and as a metaphor (a strategy for provoking interpretation).

– Edwin Carels, *Spaces of Wonder. Animation and Museology*, in *Pervasive Animation* 2012, 292-3)

He's also described it as *a state of mind*: see his brilliant curated 2007 Borderline Behaviour exhibition: https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.tentrotterdam.nl/en/tentoonstelling/20070125_borderline_behaviour/__;!!IBzWLUs!Q-4BmmSCA5V5WyMkJhmZ729lXWSy2pw5PyuhukPP_Gc7PD7aKr9lXDhfTCzv4KdILaM5j33yESZ1VakEwSak_8sK82fu29nQ2jh4UmQ$

Edwin gave a talk on this at the 2007 *Tate Modern Pervasive Animation Conference* (Abstract below) :

Borderline Behaviour – Drawn towards Animation
Ever since animation pioneer Émile Cohl made his debut, many artists havebeen hard to situate in the interval between live action and animation, between animation and the visual arts, between animation and graphic design. This talk presents some notes on an expanded notion of animation as a state of mind, a strategic approach to both technology and to the imaginary.

So, ultimately no answer to Alex's question or to Denslows'!

◡

From Malcolm Cook

This is something of a contentious matter! Long-standing members will recall the 'definition wars' of 2008 on the old Yahoo group, and some may still be nursing wounds and grievances...

I think a good place to start is Donald Crafton's article *The Veiled Genealogies of Animation and Cinema* (indeed, the whole of that special issue of *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* is excellent and worth reading) https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1746847711404979

◡

From Sam Gurry:

This is a bit flippant of a response, I mean it's a meme, but dang if I don't like this. It's all animation!

From *24memespersecond*
https://www.instagram.com/24memespersecond/?hl=en

◡

From Jean Detheux:

For quite some time now, working in real time has become my main interest, so much so that even my studio work is treated as if in a live images - music concert.

I've written a fair bit on the subject, but I am much more interested in the *doing* than in the *talking about the doing*.

Today (Dec 11) happens to be the 5th anniversary of the event dearest to me: https://vimeo.com/311672590
And here are videos of some of the concerts I have participated in: https://vimeo.com/showcase/3659581
My focus is on "experiential 'abstract' animation," very different from "experimental."

(The conversation continues as of 14 December 2023, when this selection was assembled. Further notes will be shared in upcoming newsletters! - yrhmbltypst)

EXTRA! ASIFA Central EXTRA!

January *"IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!"* MMXXIV[AoDi]

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
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Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Occasionally Bothersome Membership Coordinator
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With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

ASIFA Central Celebrates Its First SEMI-CENTURY!

WITH A BOOK, NO LESS
but wait - there's MORE!

THE MEMBERSHIP IS THE STAR OF THIS PROJECT!

ASIFA Central has built its existence on the foundation of the creativity and industry of its members, in times both lush and lean, in the limitless love for the art of animation. It's time to toot some horns and pop some corn.

Here's the plan, and you don't even have to take notes, because, well, you're looking at the notes right here! How convenient! How 21st century!

Here's the "General Idea"
Intro - ASIFA International President (Deanna)
Intro - ASIFA Central President (Julie)

The sections -

- Ups and Downs of three generations of animation
- The organizational structure/origins of ASIFA
- History and founding of ASIFA Central
- Tributes to members who have passed

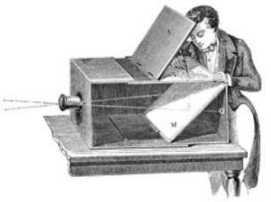
IAD - ASIFA Central contributions over the years - posters, frame grabs, KAFI festivals
AWG programs and films

Review of Retreats over the past 50 year, ie: Starved Rock, Chicago, St Louis, Grand Rapids, Virtual ZOOMies

"Best of Coffee Breaks" with Michael Long

Membership Boast and Brag section - we'll be offering two or more pages of text and photos for each member, highlighting independent artists!

For example:
- Bri Yarhouse and high school student education in animation
- Tracy Miller-Robins and free film festival blog
- Chuck Wilson - forensic animation, Women in Animation programming, blog
- Gretchen Vinnedge and GR's Community Media Center



And YOUR opportunity to BOAST AND BRAG!!! This is a Publish or Perish society!

"Best of" the newsletter archive - notable articles/pages (with month/year noted) throughout

Winsor McCay review - he walked the streets of Edmore Michigan!

A mouth-watering sampling from *The Bibliography*!

Challenges for the years ahead - ie, creating networks promoting enhanced educational opportunities, both for training and the trainers!

An Index - it may even be accurate!

The "core publishing magnates" met Sunday afternoon (January 21) to toss around ideas.
A CALL TO GREATNESS!
Our goal is a 120-150 page celebration book, available in print form via Amazon, with free pdfs for members on our website and archive.org. The print copy will be made available at the "print cost" to those interested, to reduce overhead and inventory stocking.
The deadline for submissions will be 15 August 2024. Submissions after that will have to wait for a "second edition."
The expected "roll-out" of the project will be in mid-October, to coincide with IAD '24.

If you are "wondering what you should talk about," consider answering some of the following questions, make up some of your own, and submit to ***yr hmbl typst*** along with **How You Want To Be Remembered Forever AND EVER** with copious pictures or yourself or your work, or your work AND yourself!

The Sinister All-Invasive QUESTIONS in QUESTION can include:

1. When was your first experience watching an animated film?
2. If you remember the film, what was it?
3. Do you remember the impression it made? Were you just entertained, drawn in by the character, attracted by the sound, style, color?
4. When did you first think about making an animated film?
5. Which came first - making a film or making an animated film?
6. What were your resources at the time?
7. How did you find your first training? By books? School? Special animation-based academy?

8. Who was the first animator or studio you remember making an impression?
9. What is the theatrical experience of watching an animated film in your country? Family? Going with friends? Going on your own?
10. What is the first animated film you watched more than once?
11. Why?
12. What medium did you first explore - drawing frame by frame, molding clay, stop motion, flip books?
13. What medium do you prefer now?
14. What software did you first use?
15. What formal training have you found most beneficial?
16. Does your school coordinate festival showings of student work? How are they programmed?
17. Is animation a field you find personally rewarding? If you couldn't get "a job" in animation, would you still do it on your own?
18. If you couldn't be an animator, what career would you follow?
19. Could you incorporate animation into that career?
20. Do NOT, and we repeat, DO NOT provide your mother's maiden name or the last four digits of your social security number!!!!

You'll be getting updates and more annoying reminders to participate as the weeks and months progress. Don't experience grievous FOMO! Time to get all shiny!!!

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) January 2024,, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com *or, for dull bloggery,* https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.

Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!

ASIFA Central

Late February | "IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!" | MMXXIV[AoDi]

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Coffee Breaks Abounding!

T*h e January 4th* assembly of international animators had some of the membership rising, literally, to the occasion - it was 5am in Mumbai! *Wolf Children, Robot Dreams,* and *Letter to a Pig* were added to everyone's "must see" list for 2024, as was *The Boy and the Heron,* the latest farewell film by Hayao Miyazaki, now 83 years young and perpetually dazzling. The year may well be a collection of "very good things happening to very bad movies," to judge from some of the blanket distribution choices at theatres, or resurrections of films streamed during the pandemic for a second life on a shared big screen.

International distribution systems are also wildly variable - the emerging animation industry in Greece is finding its niche with *The Knight's Hart* and Denmark is underwriting projects with its Animation Workshops scheduled throughout the coming year.

Independent productions continue to struggle with completion - the anxiety from hearing "I'm still waiting on..." (insert production step here) is palpable.

Deanna Morse is re-working her website, everyone is more than somewhat frustrated by the file update process of the IMDb, and one of Michael Long's students gave him a plastic gorilla.

The February 1st caffeinated coordination fell within days of the centennial of Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* performance at Aeolian Hall, making its first acoustic recording from a few weeks later one of the latest entries into the amazing world of the Public Domain. The west coast was experiencing *atmospheric rivers* ("how's the fishing there?") and Carlos Rosas held the record for a commute to work (but his trips to CalArts from LA gave him lots of practice).

AI entered the discussion as a probable challenge but, nonetheless, a helpful tool for a solitary producer needing a variety of inspirational sketches and designs quickly, and the softwares *Glaze* and *Nightshade* can poison a digital creation from being absorbed by the borg of artificial intelligence.

January 2024 - Animators in search of a warm place to talk: Jim, Mike, Deanna, Gretchen, David, Orrin, Vivi, Chris and Shweta

As things in this technological quagmire evolve, there was a consensus among experienced creators that, "We don't know what's right, but we know what's wrong," with the added observation that "we can be outlaws" at times (Chat GPT later announced the release of its AI *Sora*, which will create text-to-image animation with reportedly simple statements).

Deanna Morse indicated that her attendance at the upcoming Academy Awards is unlikely, but she *will* be among the judges at this year's Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Signe Baumane's Ann Arbor Showing of "My Love Affair With Marriage"

Gary Schwartz emerged on the Zoom screen, near the end of the February coffee discussion, to share his experiences with the recent Ann Arbor showing of *My Love Affair With Marriage,* a multiple-layers-of-labor-of-love feature by Signe Baumane, nine years in the making. It has been getting a roadshow distribution across the country. Gary came away from the experience electrified, inspired, and infected with CoVid. "What do you expect - I was in a packed theatre surrounded by college students."

Signe Baumane in Ann Arbor - Jan 2024

"My Love Affair With Marriage"

Buster Keaton: Home - First Festival Showing in Toronto

Another film with a protracted production, Jim Schaub's *Buster Keaton: Home* will be having its festival premiere on April 11 at the Toronto International Film Festival, "one of the most prestigious and largest publicly attended film festivals in the world, founded in 1976." It operates out of the TIFF Lightbox Cultural Centre, in downtown Toronto.

The documentary covers the teen years of Buster Keaton in Muskegon, Michigan, with recollections by Muskegon historians, Keaton family members, and actors Carl Reiner and James Karen. Some newsletter editor in Edmore Michigan provided the animation. The film's trailer is at - http://www.busterkeatonhome.com/sneak-peek/ and the animated bits are still cluttering up Vimeo at - https://vimeo.com/796085457

Celebrating Valentine's Day

ASIFA Central Secretary Jim Middleton was given an assignment from family social coordinator Sparrow to build a Valentine's Greeting for all her favorite humans - the result is two minutes you'll never get back: https://vimeo.com/911926044

David Lynch is 78 - he started with short films featuring animation, imagine that! *The Alphabet* (1968) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJ_t1eOAipo

The phenomenon called ERASERHEAD

Public Domain Day Update

(notes from a January 25th 2024 live presentation hosted by the Internet Archive)

In 2024, films from 1928 besides *Steamboat Willie* will be entering the public domain, and by year's end, all recordings from 1924 will be officially in the public domain (get out those first acoustic records of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and go crazy). This means the *silent* version of MM's *Plane Crazy* is at your disposal, but frankly, let The Mouse Snooze at this point. *I Want to be Bad* from *Playin' Through* joins its sister melody *Button Up Your Overcoat* in the list, so it's time to get playful.

AI is a legal challenge still, for who owns the copyright on the created image - the text prompt creator or the software developer? Currently ownership leans toward the person with the paws on the keyboard, provided it is a person at the keyboard. It is strongly recommended to read any fine print when developing visual assets in using otherwise "free" software.

(Postscript: A use of public domain material - early recordings, outcast sound beds from RKO collections, Library of Congress images, stuff the cat dragged in, can be witnessed in *Political Asylum* from yr humbl typst - another 230 seconds you'll never get back https://vimeo.com/856397514)

Notes from Animator's Education Forum and Accelerate Sessions - January, 2024

Tim Jones of the University of Colorado and Andrew Ames, currently in Pittsburgh, shared their experiences of building an animation program in the far-off-main campus basement lab that had once served as a prep room for the adjunct faculty. Hence, a main take-away from their discussion was - *The space is Important! The space must be accessible! The space is for exploration!* **However,** a remote space does provide a certain level of autonomy from peering eyes and probing

inquiries. Their program was so remote, in fact, that one had to be enrolled in the production course to even discover that there *was* an animation lab. They enjoyed the luxury of "Benign Neglect" as a result, akin to the inhabitants of Termite Terrace at Warner's during their Golden Age.

Students created and developed legacy material, researching and building artifacts that outlined how to animate with Legos, the use of iPhones vs DragonFrame, how broken parts of old action figures can be more interesting to use than the proscribed Legos...with a foundational approach of "first, do no harm." (ûöåëÝåéí Þ ì‹ âëÜðôåéí - since this is referencing an academic environment).

Final "Best Practices" from this Animator's Education Forum can be summed up thusly:

– make the animation lab accessible and expandable
– embrace non-animator students - the Colorado program included nursing students and those enrolled in curricula in sore need of creative, expressive outlets
– don't be "gear snobs" – the tools don't make the *animator* (a head's up to AI)
– failures happen - embrace and share them!
– do things in small pieces
– prolong the "institutional memory"
– don't chase waterfalls - develop *agile methodologies*
– listen to the students; they'll keep you current!!

Besides yr humbl typst, those in attendance included animators from *Little Mermaid, Fergully*; educators from CalArts, the Netherlands, and San Jose.

Birgitta Hosea, of *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Animation Studies*, (www.birgittahosea.co.uk - and PLEASE check out her site if only for the index page) moderated the *Accelerate Sessions* that sprang forth on January 21, which became an inspirational study on how to integrate animation with a live performance – ***and*** how to make both aspects of the stage event appear to be improvised. This is not an easy concept for animators to embrace, since several thousand drawings, filmed in a proscribed sequence, seem unlikely as an improvisational medium.

"Live performance allows for an ephemeral, reciprocal experience of the audience's gaze."
- a random voice recorded in yr hmbl typst's notebook

The spectrum of interactive performances extended to its origins in panoramas of the 18th and 19th centuries to the newer installations with names like "Effervescent Shadow Bazaar," the multi-projection "Eventual Horizon," fore-and-aft-illumination for "The Road With Trees," triptychs inspired by Emily Dickinson, moving scrolls, shadow plays, scalloped diorama screens, organic construction of staged, visual masks, and the human body as a screen.

The participants described their performances as "jazz riffing," an audio-visual collaboration, and finding joy within class activities that can be scaled to proportionally larger venues.

Their consensus was that with any such project, knowing the space before creating the performance is essential.

It was a breathless, robust 75 minutes with Rose Bond, Johannes DeYoung, and Miwa Matreyek. Their complete bios, with links to projects, is at https://animateprojects.org/acceleratesessionlive/

Walk Cycle (2021) - Birgitta Hosea

AWG, ASA and More Updates
from Deanna Morse
President, ASIFA International

Educators have their own teaching approaches... our method combined ideas from 10 year old girls with our teacher-filmmaker ideas in a positive way. First, I need to say, we are part of an international initiative, where kids around the world make animations based on a common theme. This year, our theme was *Be Who You Want To Be.* That was why we organized this workshop.

We only had the kids for four hours. We introduced each other, and then started by brainstorming - kids made lists of who they want to be, what they are now, what they remember fondly from the past. Then we made color mood collages, tearing colors from magazines. Then each girl created a watercolor background inspired by their brainstorming, one each, and created the dolls.

The next session, we created a modest film storyboard from their brainstorming and backgrounds, which we discussed with the girls. We brought in props based on their brainstorming. They had some great ideas for improving the structure, which we incorporated.

Then, we shot the animation, and used the mood collages to create their name dots, and although we had a few more ideas for painstakingly slow frame by frame under the camera animation, we took a big break and played outside! Hey, it was a sunny day, and these are 10 year old girls!

Then, Jane (Flint) and I spent another two days editing the footage into this two-minute little hit of happiness. The girls love it. We do too. I think it captures a moment in time of the life of 10 years olds...

Here it is! -
https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/913789793

BUT WAIT!
THERE's ***MORE***
from our International President!

Hi, ASIFA/Central friends - First of all, I am going to Ann Arbor to be on the jury this year, and I will be screening my films on Wednesday March 27, 1 PM, Michigan Theater, free screening. I am calling it "Move-Click-Move."

Second, there is a new-ish initiative from ASIFA – the extended deadline is April 4 -- for an outstanding student film, with a $1500 award.

(The material is attached to this newsletter)

Perhaps you have some student work to enter or offer?

From Anastasia Dimitra, program coordinator, ASIFA Student Award (ASA):

Hello, ASIFA Chapters – I kindly ask you to contribute to the *ASIFA Student Awards*, by:

(1) Sending student short animation films (length up to 10 minutes). We must have the director's written permission to include the films in a screening program from your country. The compilation will be shown around. (The written permission form is also attached to this

newsletter).
(2) Proposing a local festival that will cooperate with ASIFA to host the awards

The aim of this project is to encourage and support student creativity, geared for all students, even those who are not eligible to be members of ASIFA. This will promote awareness about the association. ASIFA should arrange events at Universities (art and animation faculties) and animation festivals in collaboration with local ASIFA chapters to promote ASA.
The selection committee and jury will be announced soon, as well as which festival shall be willing to host the ASA.

Competition guidelines
The directors can use any animation techniques they wish with aesthetical elements that characterize animation art, with an eye toward the future.

Entries must be student short films created or published after January 1, 2022.
Chapters may promote up to five student films.
No registration fee is required.
After completing the entry forms (attached), please submit them for consideration to:

anadimitra1@gmail.com

Submission deadline: April 4, 2024

The submitted films shall be available to all chapters for one year period of screenings.
All directors need to sign a contract (attached) with ASIFA that after the competition for the period of one year, ASIFA may use the films for screenings. ASIFA would send screening reports to all directors.
The ASA trophy is €/$1,500 - and €/$500 for the winner travel expenses.

(Again, the forms will be at the end of this newsletter as an attachment, and in the newsletter archive for February 2024)

Update from the West Coast: The Annie Awards 2024

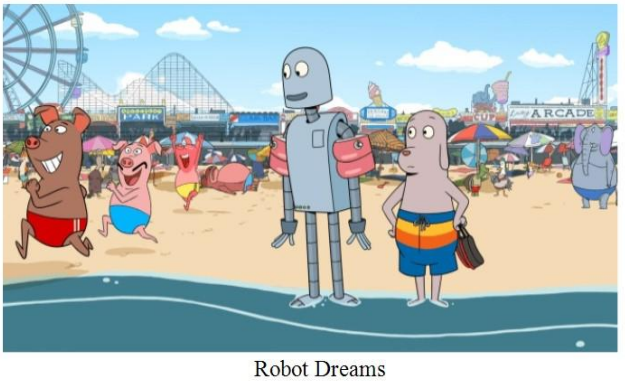
from the ASIFA-SF newsletter - editor, Karl Cohen

Across the Spider-Verse

Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse wins best commercial feature and *Robot Dreams* wins best independent feature at the Annie Awards. You can see the entire three-hour award ceremony online at https://annieawards.org/winners

Spider-Man: Across the Spider Verse was the biggest winner, both in applause and for winning all seven nominated categories (best commercial feature, FX, character design, direction, music, production design, and editorial).

Robot Dreams won best independent feature, and *War is Over!,* inspired by the music of John and Yoko was the best independent short. It also just won Spain's Goya Award for Best Animated Feature.



Robot Dreams

Hayao Miyazaki's *The Boy and the Heron* earned Annies for character animation and Miyazaki's storyboarding. It has won most of the critics' awards. It also just won the Best Animated feature at the BAFTA ceremony in the UK

ANNIE AWARDS 2024 (continued)

Nimona had nine Annie nominations and it won for voice acting and writing.

Three honorary Winsor McCay Awards were given. They went to legendary animator and director Charlotte "Lotte" Reiniger (posthumously), Studio Ghibli composer Joe Hisaishi; and National Film Board animator and producer Marcy Page.

The Ub Iwerks Award for technical advancement was awarded posthumously to John Oxberry for his developing and producing the Oxberry animation stand that was used for many decades to shoot cell animation.

Monthly Stats at the ASIFA.org Website

January 2024 - Visits 185, Views 300, and *TWO LIKES! A new website RECORD!*

Membership Renewal Notices

They'll be going out this month, too, for applicable members. Woo! With the upcoming 50th anniversary celebration of ASIFA Central, and with membership getting all the self-promotional space it would like in that published celebration, perhaps a membership will be helpful in maintaining an Eternal Presence In Print (digital or otherwise) for the aeons to come.

Draft History of ASIFA and ASIFA Central for 50th Anniversary Celebration Book

(ok, so we're a few months ahead! The next several iterations of this newsletter will contain "draft" versions of several sections for members to review and suggest edits. This will be the prelude to the Big Hoo-Ha Final Layout, at which point Yr Hmbl Typst will be in an undisclosed location, with soundproof walls, and little contact with the outside world...)

On ASIFA International - *ASIFA International – A short history (info source: ASIFA.net)*

ASIFA (Association Internationale du Film d'Animation) was founded in 1960 in Annecy, France. Renowned Canadian animator Norman McLaren (*Neighbors*, et al) was elected its first president. McLaren, John Halas and other founding members envisioned a world of peace and dialogue to settle international differences, with the art of animation serving as a bridge between different cultures and ideologies.

"Animation is not a religion; neither is it a political movement in any sense. It remains a true contemporary art form which has been unrecognized for what it can achieve… we consider animation as a universal expression which is capable of immense contribution if given a chance." /

– John Halas, President's Letter (1979)

Working with UNESCO, ASIFA strives to unite the animation world in peace by trying to find ways for animators to meet in person, originally from both sides of the Iron Curtain.
The main goal of ASIFA is to share animation films and develop lasting international friendships. Technology is instrumental in creating at-distance links more immediate, with the potential for instantaneous exchange of ideas.

"I was sometimes asked to help out at international board meetings, sometimes taking minutes, sometimes (inexpertly) interpreting, and thus witnessing Cold War relationships up close. Despite mutual suspicion and frequent high drama, agreements were slowly thrashed out, film exchanges, visiting delegations and new festivals organized."

– Clare Kitson, ASIFA Member and second recipient of the Lotte Reiniger Achievement Award (2018)

The development of the ASIFA-China group in 1984 opened Chinese animation to the world and encouraged the Shanghai Animation Festival. Other chapters soon followed in Iran, South Korea, India, and Egypt, expanding the global reach of ASIFA. Recently, ASIFA has welcomed new chapters in Germany, Thailand, China-Xiamen and Lithuania. Now, with more than 40 chapters worldwide, this spirit of peace, love and tolerance continues to guide ASIFA.

"Sharing a common interest with a friend on the other side of the world will build bridges to a far-off community and give you the ability to talk through ideas and work together with someone who may have a completely different perspective on life. ASIFA wants you to find that friend and form the bonds that build strong communities within a global society."

– Ed Desroches,, ASIFA Colorado, and former ASIFA International President

ASIFA Target Goals:

ASIFA promotes opportunities for professionals in animation to share information and network globally through our publications and public communications.

ASIFA is concerned with sustaining and preserving the rights of animators and the art of animation by promoting, educating, cooperating, and assisting others.

ASIFA promotes progress toward peace and mutual understanding through the unified interest of the art of animation with workshops, gatherings, and worldwide projects.

ASIFA pursues these goals through a variety of activities both internationally and through local chapters.

ASIFA Central is proud to be among those worldwide chapters, and in 2024, is thrilled to note that member Deanna Morse is the current president of ASIFA International.

On ASIFA Central

(draft text, based on earlier histories with some updates)

ASIFA-Central was founded in Chicago in 1975 as an association of professional, independent, and student animators and has since expanded to encompass a larger regional area, becoming the Midwest USA Animation Chapter of ASIFA in the process. Members hail from Ohio to Oregon, from Michigan to Missouri, with occasional ambassadors from Europe and India.

Art Pierson was the first President, followed by David Daruszka, who helmed the chapter for over a dozen years. Deanna Morse served as President for many years, and was also elected to the international ASIFA board – first as a chapter representative, then International Vice-President, and finally President of ASIFA International. Bri Yarhouse, Jim Middleton, Marla Schweppe, and Randy Rockafellow were also chapter Presidents through the 1990s and the early 2000s. Julie Goldstein of Grand Rapids, Michigan is the current chapter President (2024).

Beyond these Presidents, several members have been indispensable for ASIFA Central activities over the decades, including Barry Young, Mary Lou Haynes, Jennifer Peterson, Jim Duesing, Gretchen Vinnedge, and Gordon Peterson. Our organization has been fortunate to have them among the many animators working as active volunteers over the years. When CoVid ravaged the social scenes, Michael Long of Missouri began a monthly "coffee break" to keep the scattered membership in touch.

In the early 1990's, ASIFA-Central became the first ASIFA chapter to create and post a website. Pioneer webmaster, Byron Grush, received several awards for the site, including an 1WAY award, and a citation from Animation Magazine as "one of the top 15 organizations that make a difference." ASIFA.ORG continues to be an active repository of information and resources.

ASIFA-Central co-sponsored many programs over the decades and has brought in visiting animators including Don Bluth, June Foray, Gordon Sheehan, Ed Hooks, Chris Sullivan, Nina Paley, and Shamus Culhane. Calabash Animation and Big Idea shared their production pipeline methods with the Midwestern membership. For years, the chapter coordinated the judging of animation at the Chicago International Film Festival.

For over a decade, ASIFA-Central held annual weekend retreats at Starved Rock Lodge in Illinois and elsewhere in the Chicago area. More recent retreats were in conjunction with the SMart Festival (Grand Rapids) and the happily-ever-aftering known as KAFI (Kalamazoo Animation Festival International), the brainchild of ASIFA Central member David Baker that brightened the first decade of this century. Members have also participated in judging at area film festivals, with Deanna Morse being a frequent, welcome presence at the AAFF (Ann Arbor).

For many years, ASIFA-Central was closely affiliated with the HVH World Peace Storyboard Competition, which gave scholarships to students to create animations envisioning world peace. Animations created through this initiative were shared and screened internationally. Rita Dobias, who passed in 2022, was a noteworthy participant and chapter member.

Longtime chapter member Bri Yarhouse has become closely associated with International Animation Day, and now serves as its International coordinator, continuing the heritage of celebration each October.

Our active membership is continuously creating, educating, and promoting the animation field, establishing international links and lasting friendships with every journey or shared video screen. This modest publication champions their stories and accomplishments – to inspire others and fulfill one of the undersung missions of ASIFA:

"Animation Unites Us."
– animationem coniungit –

It has been quite a 50 year ride, but the "old timers" are always thrilled to have new generations come and play in their yards.

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) late-February, 2024, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - *https://asifa.net* *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*

ANIMATION UNITES US

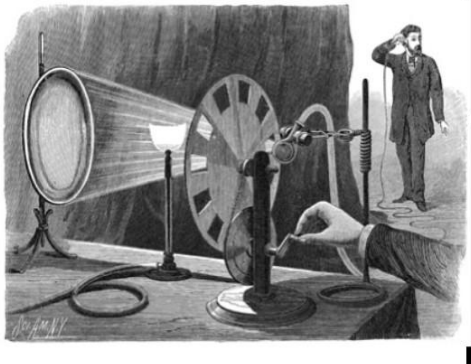
As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at *jim.middletonrx@gmail.com* *or, for dull bloggery,* *https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com*

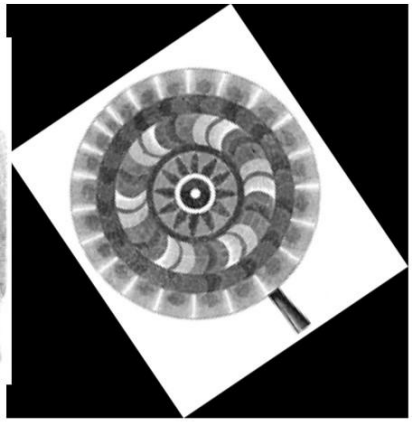
ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.

Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!

ALSO NOTE
As the 50 year anniversary of ASIFA Central approaches,
feel free to offer suggestions for material for the
commemorative book (or booklet).
The contact is yr hmbl typst, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com





ASIFA Central

April | "IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!" | MMXXIV[AoDi]

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

Our Dazzling President
Julie Goldstein

A Pristine Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and Spectacular International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Dashing Social Media Coordinators and Chapter Ambassadors:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Frequently Bothersome Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Frisky, Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse!
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge!
Stephen Leeper!
Michael Long!
Bob Swieringa!
Charles Wilson!

Monthly Abundance of Coffee, Broken With Glee

(The March 7th session, 6:30pm-8pm EST)

The request for member filmographies from yr hmbl typst began the coffee break in March, with a half-dozen visitors dashing between dinner, meetings, and checking homework. The ultimate fate of Skype under the master eye of Microsoft stimulated a chat on the shortcomings of Windows, the benefit of frequently clearing the "scratch disk" and mysteriously appearing temporary files, which never seem temporary, and the use of family gatherings in Zoom. Of course, family gatherings led to a chat about Gathertown by the ASIFA Central social guru, Tracy Miller-Robins, and then someone mentioned AI. And Apple's permanent, irreversible updates - egad, where is RedHat! AI. The pernicious pervasive AI. It has its place for menial tasks, and perhaps even to lend some stimulation for ideas, but as a self-contained entertainment source, has a long way to go; meaning, in computer time, 18.23 months.

Current students report a preference for the hand-drawn look, thinking AI makes everything appear like mid-90s anime. Options beyond ChatGPT, use of AI to adapt pre-created images in DragonFrame or on paper, then introducing a variation via rotoscope into a project, seem to offer some use; having it create several dozen text-driven poses and angles for storyboards.

A parallel time for AI can be traced to the 1993 film Jurassic Park - the effects were begun as stop-motion, but after a CGI demo, everything flipped to that new technology - and within four months, the stop-motion division of ILM became a quaint memory.
CGI in film - a substitute for makeup, or is it akin to AI, where without the facial appliances, the actor cannot fully submerge into the role? Or when is removing facial wrinkles enhancing cosmetics but diminishing a performance?

A whispered observation: "The upcoming Oscars became a checklist of what is great, underviewed, overrated, or completely unknown in the animation shorts division."

Some theatres have even had sold-out time slots for the films (Houston, et al); students also weighed in on them this year: "These are quite mature - and quite disturbing."

Award Contenders:
I'm Hip (USA)
Letter to a Pig (France/Israel)
Ninety-Five Senses (USA)
Our Uniform (Iran)
Pachyderme (France)
WAR IS OVER! * Music of John Lennon and Yoko Ono (USA)
**** spoiler alert - this film won***
Wild Summon (UK)

Viewing the Oscars on ABC may be a challenge - ABC offered viewing over-air and through paid streaming services. Apartment dwellers are at the mercy of lead-footed and aluminum capped neighbors for their viewing experiences.

Deanna championed her AWG films, and look for a reel stitching together the totality of participating chapters for IAD '24. With the theme, "Be who you can be," it was interesting that the youthful approach was more about "what it means to be 10 years old," not "what do I want to be when I grow up." There is a delight with having children in a workshop, for they "feel invincible, unhurried, and unworried."

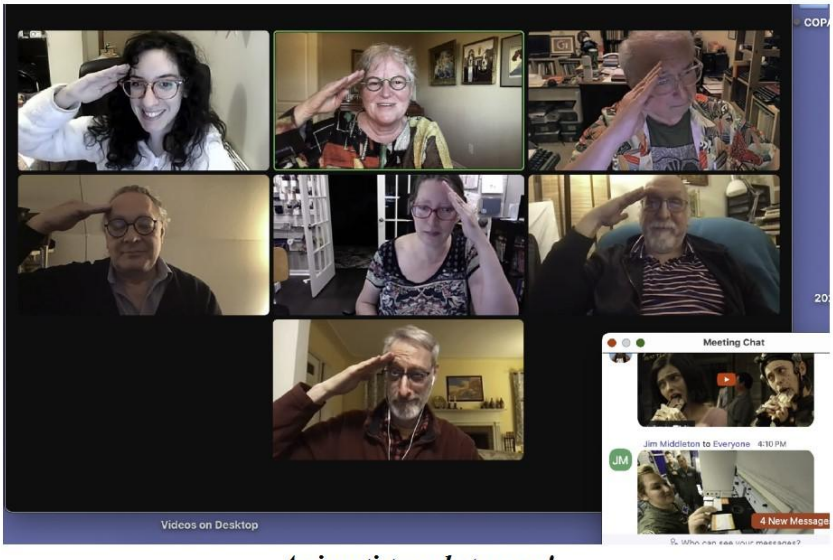
The tallest animator in the northern hemisphere, Bob Swieringa, suggested to all that a monthly "game night" is a healthy, painless way to gather friends for healthy interactions, be it by gaming, or by pulling out a deck of cards to just play a game. Remember those days?

Then, philately reared its head - it appears the USPS has a healthy market among animators for its perforated products. Disney Villianesses are a hot commodity among collectors of sticky rectangles of paper.

After the general gathering dispersed, a trio of die-hard chatterers remained to muse on film and animation humor, going back into the realms of Harry Langdon, Raymond Griffith, and Buster Keaton as sources of inspiration, recalling that Keaton attributed the death of silent film comedy not so much for the soundtrack, but because animation could draw the outrageous physical gags without harm to the actors. "Let's face it, we were cartoons in the 1920s. Once sound and color hit the actual cartoons, we couldn't compete." (The quote appears to be rather apocryphal).

Yr Hmbl Typst has another apocryphal note to the proceedings as the dust settled and the sofas beckoned - "The Stalking Moth - He comes for the light, but stays for the wool!" It may have something to do with a talking point during the coffee break, but maybe it was all just a dream...just a dream...just a...zzzzzzzzz.

If you wish to join in the monthly fun, drop a note to the Host With The Most, Mssr. Michael Long, at michaellonglong@hotmail.com ...



Animati te salutamus!

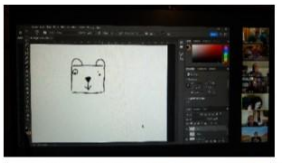
The April 4th Session - Coffee Breakage Continues!

(6:30pm - 8pm EST)

While David Thrasher creates his own pilot film to keep things perking at our monthly coffee breaks, Michael Long continues to pilot the caffeinated carafe into yet another month. And there is never a scarcity of subject matter!

- *Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* is still in circulation, *but now includes a website!* https://www.mcsweeney.net - aka "McSweeney's Internet Tendency" - the universe is spinning happily

- Are all software companies diving onto the greedy, money-grubbing business model of leasing their product, leaving creators and their productivity at the mercy of their soon-to-be bought out status? Well, the imbibing attendees in April tossed about the miracle of DaVinci as an alternate editing suite to Premiere and the ever-morphing Sony Vegas (not Sony? Now Magix? Music? Video?). DaVinci has a free and - of course! - *Pro* version. Gimp still positions itself as an option to Photoshop, and OpenToons and Moho offer reasonable one-time fees for more possessive licensing, as does Krita, although their business models and open-source structure make improvements a bit slow to implement.



Vivi Markatos provides a lightning-round demonstration of her character design exercises for up-and-coming animators across Europe!

- Deanna Morse and Tracy Miller-Robbins faced (with proper eye protection, of course) the possible End Of The World with the Indiana version of the total eclipse of the sun on April 8 (Yr hmbl typst only experienced a 93.1% eclipse, and it was amazing how lit up Edmore can be with 6.9% sunshine - must be the plethora of dispensaries there).

- Orrin Scott's six session series on *Animation - A Lifeline to Our Daily Lives* is deep diving into workshopped knowledge among its participants. And Abigail Disney's 2022 documentary, *The American Dream and Other Fairy Tales* (examining income inequality at her family's company and asking why the American dream seems so out of reach for so many), is still making the circuits, with special consideration for non-profit showings (and...hmmm...maybe *retreat performances).*

- And speaking of retreats, *The Retreat for 2024* at ASIFA Central, is still circling around the date of August 10...with details ever-growing and retreating as well. More to come!

- Vivi Markatos is moving into her first British Isle semi-house, or half-house, or Princess Castle Near The Channel. She is dazzling animation aspirants with character design creation programs making use of basic geometric patterns - never have circles, squares, curves, and lines created such happy mermaids. April 2 was International Children's Book Day! Read the past to future generations! *Viva Vivi!*

- Carlos Rosas appeared amidst his coordination of the *Happy Valley Animation Festival*, now in its fourth year, with 125 countries participating and over 1700 animations submitted. https://happyvalleyanimationfestival.org/

- Michael Long came upon letters between his parents in 1971 discussing their son and his cinematic proclivities around the house, "looking like grown-ups." But as all animators know, we only *look* like grown-ups - our personal Venn diagrams intersect that circle only when absolutely necessary, like on April 15 (oh that Schedule C!).

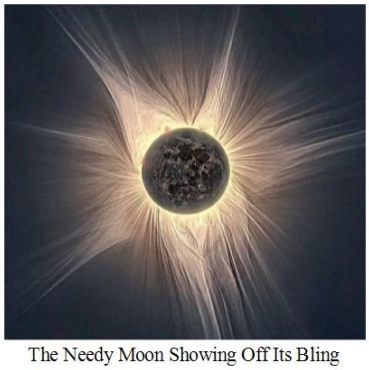
"Let's Go Out for Some Coffee!"

ROTOGRAVURE DEPARTMENT

ASIFA Postcard Designs Come Pouring In!

Members Embrace Spring!

Steve Leeper in Production

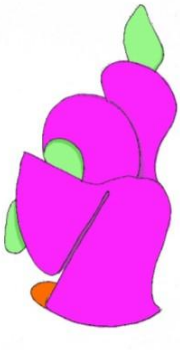


The Needy Moon Showing Off Its Bling

Training future Greek animators

Gary Schwartz in Abandoned Mine in Elephant Butte, Montana

Stamps! Remember those?



Deanna with an Asian Cat Walking an Invisible Dog - only in Ann Arbor

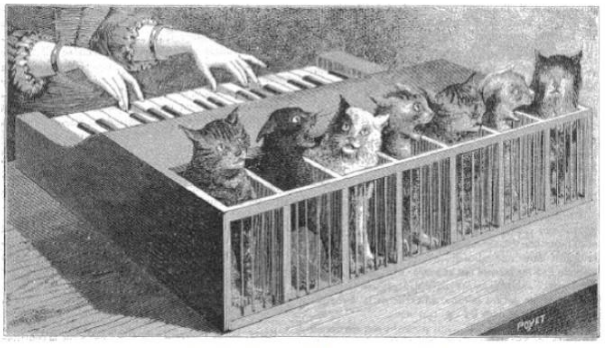
Public Domain Department - Fine Art

Craving inspiration? Backgrounds? Cat pianos? Bizarre, nightmarish images for your next Valentine card? Spells against the evil spirits of Babalonia?

Check out

https://publicdomainreview.org

and sign up for their newsletter, a monthly update on things that go bump in the night - and never, ever leave!



A genuine Cat Piano, 18th century rendering

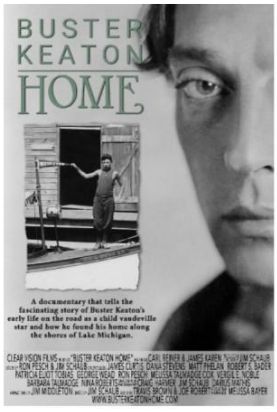
"The Orbit of Minor Satellites" by Chris Sullivan Enters Post Production

After nearly nine years under the camera, the second feature from the imagination of Chicago's Chris Sullivan is now in post production, gaining momentum, seeking some jet propulsion assistance. Almost half-way to his projected budget - https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-orbit-of-minor-satellites-finishing-funds

Other Festival News

After six years in its production, the final edit of *Keaton:Home* is gaining traction in the festival circuit. Jim Schaub's story of the brilliant vaudevillian's teen years near Muskegon has placed among the finalists at Austin's Life-Off Festival, and recently took Best Documentary recognition in Toronto. The audience even provided living, breathing, human reviews of their experience - and what a long website address they created in the process -

https://www.wildsound.ca/videos/buster-keaton-review?fbclid=IwAR3G-ug86cvK9px7zjx6o6fzlh8t4x-r2jCjLQ2D2xJZcWSOPjlSJ1TtZMA_aem_AUPZM3ialtsBLOOMCESes2QcByBdvbglabf2xDaG1906iULeZapUCvarprB6K0zizppvlMuZ08306zldKy7g1M9K



Jim Middleton's *Political Asylum* has garnered attention in Austin (Texas), Rehoboth Beach, (Delaware), Reykjavík (Iceland), Rochester (New York), and New York (also in New York). His *Flute Solo in SFUMATOSCOPE* was shown at the Happy Valley Film Festival, Pennsylvania (Eugene Rose is a hit in the Keystone State!)

OIAF Releases Its 2024 Poster

"A Playful Jaunt Through Animation"
(From an April 4 press release)

The Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF) reveals its 2024 poster designed by Chinese experimental animator Lei Lei. This year's poster is an ode to the wild creative process of an animator. Each year a different animator is selected to design the OIAF poster resulting in a unique piece of art that reflects that animator's craft.

"When I was a kid, I loved playing video games. I remember the Nintendo games of the 1990s, specifically two very popular games: Donkey Kong and Snow Bros. On the poster for the 2024 Ottawa International Animation Festival, the owl standing at the top of the poster replaces Donkey Kong. A young girl (possibly a filmmaker) must travel across the city to catch the owl, having many amazing (continued Λ)

experiences along the way," says Lei Lei. "The cinema theatre will be the end of her journey, so take a seat on a comfortable couch and wait for the show."

Lei Lei's OIAF design will join the works of past artists Matthew Rankin (2023), Angela Stempel and Amanda Bonaiuto (2021), Koji Yamamura (2012), Gary Panter (2005), and Dave Cooper (2001), among others.

This year's OIAF runs from September 25 to September 29. Visit https://www.animationfestival.ca for more information about this year's events and entry process.

Deanna Morse Absorbs the AAFF Film screening and Life Presentation

Notes garnered from the 2024 Ann Arbor Film Festival press release:

The 62nd Ann Arbor Film Festival counted among its jurors one Deanna Morse, a learned and esteemed member of the international animation community. They even included an interview as part of her afternoon of curated films during the festival, conducted by ASIFA Central president Julie Goldstein: https://vimeo.com/925111873

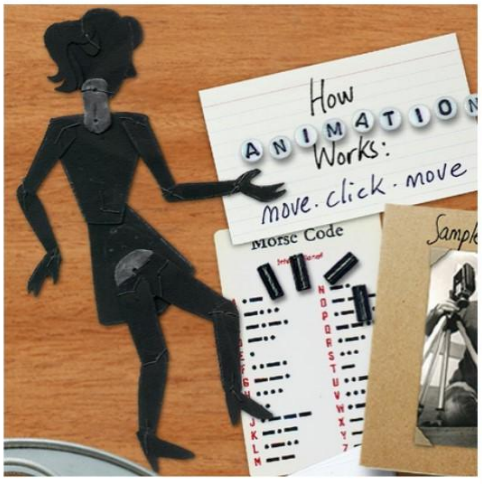
Julie Goldstein - Deanna Morse - Ann Arbor
Who could ask for anything more!?

Deanna Morse's program, "Move-Click-Move," was a diverse program of 18 animated and experimental films she created, ranging from Sesame Street to the Odessa Steps, to the Everglades and the computer lab. Deanna has made a personal commitment to create at least one film poem each year since leaving college.

Not only that, Deanna has updated her website to share these visual gems: www.deannamorse.com (With links to all films mentioned below), and her most recent project can be quickly viewed here: https://vimeo.com/913789793

Her work explores materials and techniques, shifting time and space between the drawn frames as we celebrate seasons, people, change, and nature. Collaborating with children, musicians, and puppeteers, using pioneering computer animation techniques, time-lapse, kinestasis, or simple cutouts, her visual poems become postcards with the message, "Wish you were here," often incorporating common surroundings. Move, click,

move: a lifelong metaphor.



Move-Click-Move (2001)
The introductory signature video for the award-winning retrospective DVD Move-Click-Move, published in 2001. An interactive journey through the artist's cluttered desktop.

Help! I'm Stranded… (1981)
Help! I'm stranded… in a Spartanburg motel room with: 1. a broken TV, 2. some note cards, and 3. a red crayon. It's a true story. A rubbing film, a sound-image guessing game.

Container Loss (2022)
with Jane Flint
Climate crisis, gyres, garbage patches, natural phenomena, human response, hope, loss, optimism, equanimity, integrity, awareness, and responsibility. Reminders. Cutout animation and time lapse. Music by Chris Gagnon.

Sandpaintings (1992)
with Jane DeKoven
Two Navajo-inspired figures explore symbols and their meaning. Piano music by VR inventor and philosopher Jaron Lanier. A pioneering film using VPL DataGlove motion tracking to animate the sign language hand. Art is not to be feared.

The Gift (2019)
Celebrating Walt Whitman's 200th birthday, and his poem "To a Certain Cantatrice." Original music by Edie Herrold.

A Mother's Advice (2000)
Based on a story by Beth Isacke, inspired by her hair. Created during an artist residency at Ragdale Artists Colony, Illinois. Sound design by Edie Herrold.

Skin (2012)
Thick skinned, thin skinned. The first line of defense. A surface archive. Created as an artist-in-residence at the Everglades National Park, Florida. Trees. Many trees. Mosquitos, too. Sound design by Edie Herrold.

Breathing Room (2009)
Light sweeps languidly across the tiles in a room. Outside, the flowers erupt in a riot of color. Created at Fundacion Valparaiso, an artist colony in Mojacar, Spain. Music by Edie Herrold.

Whispers of the Prairie (2013)
The first American lawn: prairie, a medley of native flowers that thrive in our forests and our sustainably landscaped lawns. In contrast, manicured green unsustainable turf grass. Music by Edie Herrold.

August Afternoons (1985)
Sunlight and shadows whisk through time. Optically printed from Super 8 footage. with Randy Buggs and Ray Harvey.

Lost Ground (1992)
A modern love story. Michigan to Chicago by train in 1992, early 3D animation.

Plants (1989)
Created with NeoVisuals Software at Sheridan College, using clunky code (keypad entry—before menus, trackpads, and the mouse). Plants can't walk. Plants don't talk. Plants can't see. Plants don't have legs. Music by Jim Barfuss with Chloe Willey.

Monkey's T-shirt (1991)
with Rose Rosely
Animated short for Sesame Street. An embedded figures puzzle. Sound by Billy Vits. Look! The animals are hiding! Can you find them?

Night Sounds: Imagination (1992)
with Rose Rosely
For Sesame Street. A little girl is so scared by the night sounds, and she is not the only one! Sound by Billy Vits. But wait! There's MORE! Λ

Dejeunez, Mon Amour (1970)
with Mark Henriksen
Close-up vision of American consumption. Before tattoos were all the rage, filmmakers Mark Henriksen and Deanna Morse had a vision. And some food. And some stock music. One of her earliest films, student-produced at Iowa State University.

Forced Perspective: Odessa Deanna Morse (2007)
A visit to the real steps at Odessa was affected by the Odessa Steps sequence from Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*. Media images have power. They shape our real-life experiences.

Postcards from My Backyard (2007)
An exploration of a single space over two years' time—the seasons of Michigan. Incorporating time-lapse footage, motion graphics, and my own musical soundscape, this video poem considers growth, decay, and transformation.

Charleston Home Movie (1980)
Memories and images of Charleston, South Carolina. Rotoscope animation of significant friends and moments. Film is represented in several collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Music by Keith Jarrett, used with permission.

Free (or Inexpensive) Software Options

a survey by David Thrasher
DAAV STUDIOS
http://www.daavstudios.com/

The one and only head of DAAV studios!

Here are some free options for video editing and animation software that might be worth checking out. Some are worth considering as true alternatives to high-priced commercial software. Subscription-based software is a particularly bad offender, especially Adobe products which seem reasonable until you add up the long term expense.

***Free Video Editing Software*:**

Shotcut (Mac, Windows, Linux)
shotcut.org
Shotcut is going to be one of the most beginner friendly offerings and will not have as high of system requirements to be useful.

OpenShot (Mac, Windows, Linux)
openshot.org
Another more basic video editor with lower system requirements.

Kdenlive (Mac, Windows, Linux)
kdenlive.org
This one is an open source video editor that was first available for Linux but later was ported to Windows and Macintosh.

HitFilm (Mac, Windows)
fxhome.com
HitFilm Express is the free version of this software. There is a Pro version that you have to pay for. It's possible that the free version may be enough for your needs.

Blender (Mac, Windows, Linux)
blender.org
This one might not seem as obvious but there is a Video Sequencer built within Blender where you can edit video.

DaVinci Resolve (Mac, Windows, Linux)
blackmagicdesign.com
The free version of DaVinci Resolve meets most people's requirements and the features missing are needed by only a very few. It probably has the highest learning curve of what is listed here for a video editor (Blender has the higher learning curve for the 3D part of the program). It also has the stiffest system requirements. There are many

people jumping ship from Adobe Premiere and going for this one. Color grading is one of the strongest features.

Free Animation Software:
Blender (Platforms: Macintosh, Windows, Linux)
3D, 2D
blender.org
This has a fairly high learning curve, especially for the 3D aspects of the program but is very powerful and features seemed to be added exponentially. It is rapidly closing in on Maya and other commercial software, surpassing some.

OpenToonz (Mac, Windows, Linux)
2D, raster and vector
opentoonz.github.io
This software has been used by Studio Ghibli. It's 2D animation software that can work with either raster or vector imagery. It's the most professional 2D only animation software on the list.

Krita (Mac, Windows, Linux)
2D, raster
krita.org
Although designed mostly as a digital drawing and painting program Krita also can do animation.

Synfig Studio (Mac, Windows, Linux)
2D, vector
synfig.org
I can't personally vouch for this one but it is an open source vector based animation program that does much the same kind of animation as Flash.

Pencil2D Animation (Mac, Windows, Linux)
2D, raster
pencil2d.org
Another one that I don't know too much about but have run across during my searches. This one looks like a fairly simply one to use.

Commercial software I'm using instead of Adobe's offerings:
Affinity Photo (in place of Adobe Photoshop)
Affinity Designer (in place of Adobe Illustrator)
Affinity Publisher (in place of Adobe InDesign).
affinity.serif.com
All have the advantage of being one time purchases and each cost about $50 roughly (sometimes on sale for less). Add up the cost of what Adobe charges for a subscription for a year and you've recouped the cost in about 2 months with this software. *Something that might be of interest to educators is that they are offering this software for free to educational institutions and certain non-profits.* My experience so far is that the software has nearly as many features as Adobe offers (and what may be missing you probably don't need anyway!).

Free alternatives to this kind of software:

Photo Editing
GIMP-GNU (Mac, Windows, Linux)
gimp.org
I've not gotten used to this one. The present version doesn't offer non-destructive editing capabilities but the next major release (which is coming soon) will. I think the interface will take some getting used to.

Vector Illustration
Inkscape (Mac, Windows, Linux, Free BSD)
inkscape.org
Of the three free offerings listed this is the one I feel most comfortable recommending. I've used it a number of times for projects before I got Affinity Designer.

Eli Noyes Remembered

Eli Noyes passed away late last month, at age 81. He was a groundbreaking stop-motion and clay animator, forging a path for many, including Will Vinton and Nick Park. This appreciation is abridged from the ASIFA-SF newsletter, written by Karl Cohen.

Eli Noyes was a multi-talented individual who excelled as both an experimental and commercial animator, a successful documentary film maker, the creator of several interactive books, an accomplished musician, and a wonderful person. He even helped shape the look and spirit of Nickelodeon and MTV.

His undergraduate film, *Clay or the Origin of Species*, received an Oscar nomination (1965), and it helped establish clay as a medium. award-winning films that were animated with clay.
https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8i92jb

Said Caroline Leaf, "I'm sad. Shocked. Eli was the golden boy from Harvard's animation class taught by Derek Lamb. Because of his outstanding *Clay or the Origin of Species*, (he) went to work at the National Film Board of Canada a year before I got a job there. But I stayed in Montreal and Eli went west." She also called him a "trail blazer."

At the NFB, Eli produced the short *Alphabet*, (1966), an energetic romp through the letters of the alphabet. This would be the first of series of *Sand Letters* shorts he created for Sesame Street (1974–1991)

Sandman (1973) showed his hard work to control material can create a fun work of art.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfNVCNIR19w
In his *Peanut Butter & Jelly* (1976) he created an outrageous humorous work made using pixilation and a silly soundtrack.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaY2xiy9nYE

In the early days of cable TV his spirit influenced the look of the Nickelodeon network. He was one of their first creative contributors. That network's first show, *Pinwheel*, featured Noyes' animated pinwheels made with sand.

In 1983, Eli and Kit Laybourne started Noyes & Laybourne Enterprises, an independent studio located in NYC's Soho. They created a lot of material for Nickelodeon, starting in the early '80's as the network needed to buy content. That resulted in the network having a variety of styles including the original shows *Eureeka's Castle* and *Gullah Gullah Island*.

At MTV they created the visually diverse *Liquid Television,* a showcase for independent animation launching a Mike Judge's *Beavis and Butthead* and Peter Chung's *Aeon Flux*. Eventually they merged with Colossal Pictures in San Francisco.

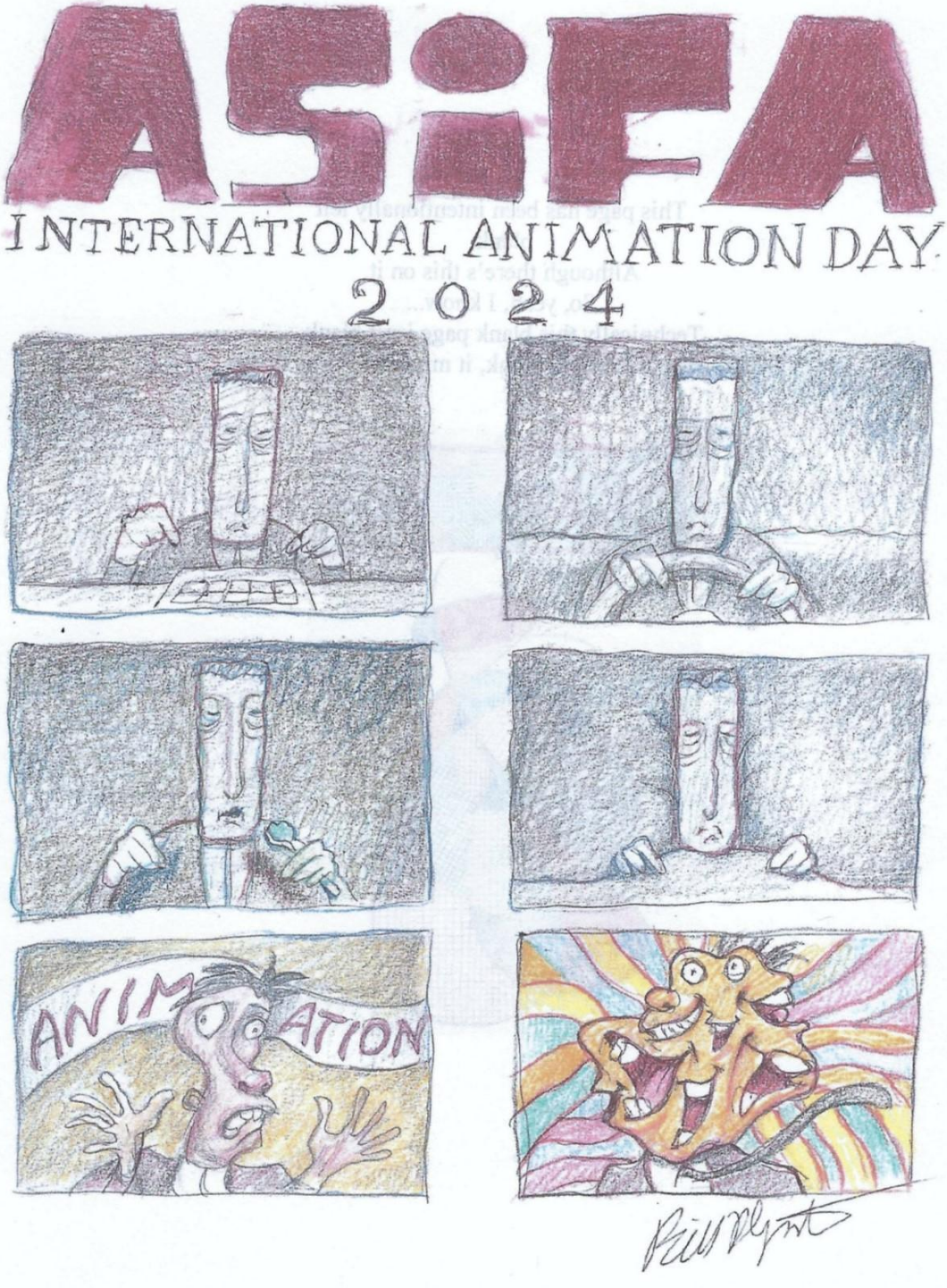
It has been said that Eli was often early to embrace new technology. He worked with The Disney Imagineers to create ZOOG Disney, one of the first afternoon program blocks that combined TV and the internet (1998-2002). Eli subsequently brought that experience to the first "convergence network" Oxygen (founded in 1998).

Noyes was also animation director on the Oscar-nominated documentary *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers* (2009).

To promote the health of the environment, a set of 16 stamps honoring Earth Day appeared in 2011. It was nearly accidental - Eli's sister, an arts commissioner at the U.S. Postal Service, called him to say, "Congratulations, you've been accepted to design the new green stamps," he laughed and said, "I hadn't even applied."

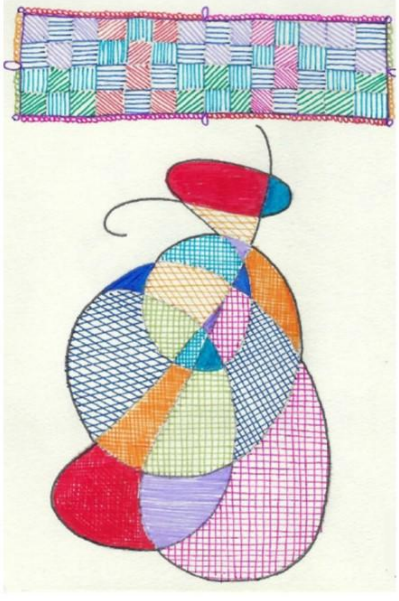
Cartoon Brew has many of his films on their site:
https://www.cartoonbrew.com/rip/eli-noyes-stop-motion-animation-pioneer-and-liquid-television-director-dies-at-81-239312.html

IT'S OFFICIAL!!!! LOOK OUT, KIDS - THIS YEAR, WE'RE PACKIN' *PLYMPTON!*



It's hard to beat news like that anywhere else in this issue, so we're just going to put it out there and let it sink in. Look for more information in the weeks ahead, and certainly look for some group projects and Anijammery to keep everyone busy, because, you know, 2024 just doesn't have enough going on already! We're Packin' Plympton!

This page has been intentionally left
blank.
Although there's this on it.
So, yeah, I know...
Technically this blank page isn't blank.
However, if I drew a blank, it might look like this:



ASIFA CENTRAL

Newsletter for June 2024

In This Issue:

International Exploits of Our Wandering Membership - Deanna Morse Works Her Passport Overtime!

The Underappreciated Impact of Astro-Boy on China - And Yet Another Metaphor

What About All This AI Fuss? Don't Ask Google or GPT, Ask the ANIMATORS!!

Gary Schwartz Because - Well, It's Gary Schwartz!

Website Stats - Stated, Coffee Breaks - Stimulated. Win-Win!

New Member Bios - ***IAD Poster Update***

Yr Hmbl Typst Types With His Eyes Shut, Spell-Check Has A Stroke and He Ends Up at Kodak and RIT

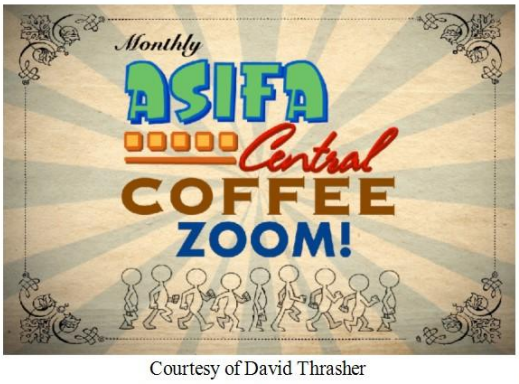
Public Domain Updates

Festival News from Europe, Canada, and Certain States that Reject 4K, Because - Well, 8 Bits is Just Good Enough

(and how many bits until a byte gets rabies, and can you byte a bit, or have a bitty byte of a byte o' mine sandwich, and now if tacos are a sandwich, will that mean the end of cumin, as in cumin around the mountain, hoarse from the six white horses)

"Animation - and coffee - unites us!" (May coffee gathering)

May 2024 Coffee Notes



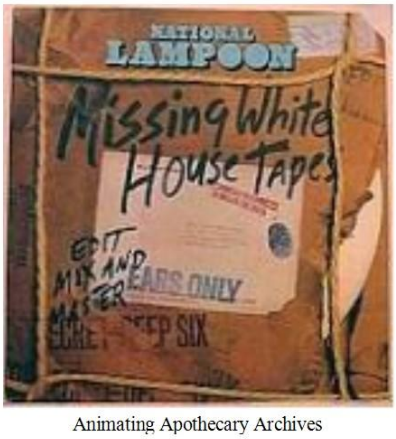
Courtesy of David Thrasher

The 11 lucky participants in May were able to experience David Thrasher's combination coffee break and animation history tribute, "Let's Go Out to the Coffee" at the start of this ongoing series of gatherings. "120 years in 15 seconds" were synchronized to an adaptation of a very familiar intermission refrain, using Blender and *udio.com* for the music creation (there were three versions - "I can't stop it," David confessed): a Swing version, a la Benny Goodman, one more in line with Artie Shaw, and a final one with a variation of Ethel Merman. Chris Sagovac suggested the film as a springboard to a group animation project.

Deanna Morse, chiming in from an undisclosed location (that certainly resembled the northwestern wilderness), propelled the members to perform a countdown with a resounding "ASIFA!" in the Zoom environment, and then attempted to get a group ASIFA shot with prepared letters from those peeking in. The caprice of Zoom made proper alignment possible, alas.

This literal ASIFA interaction was part of a group promotion for ASIFA on an international level (later note - it came out pretty dawgun good), to be edited with the assistance of Suzanne Zack, master of multitrack magic. The concurrent use of *udio* prompted a discussion on AI, as some festivals - most recently Cinanima in Portugal - have noted an uptick in AI-based submissions. *Should AI be in its own category, should it be identified as a cooperating entity, or have submissions note whether AI completely created the production?* This will be an ongoing discussion.

Library of Congress



Animating Apothecary Archives

Chris S added that, when Photoshop first appeared in a 1990 episode of the *Today Show*, the main observation was whether we can "ever trust a photograph again?" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHbM4QJYVYM)

The *Today Show* discussion seems rather quaint and naive today.

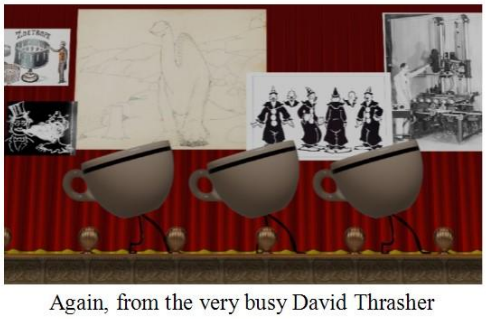
Deanna, Jim, and Michael then reminisced about the days of Watergate when all sorts of satiric liberty was taken with reality - Nixon on Quaker Oatmeal, pre-digital audio manipulation, culminating with the "Missing White House Tapes" from *The National Lampoon* (where physical editing of the infamous "No White Wash in the White House" speech was edited with Scotch tape and razor blades to have Nixon say, "Well, I'm a crook.")

The discussion then went to plans for summer trips, with Bob Swieringa musing that he looks for moments to socialize in the analog sense, in order to avoid "becoming a snail, I'm in my own house!"

Brad Uyeda, animation director from Phoenix, Arizona, offered some suggestions surrounding Adobe products before bowing out (stop motion is his specialty at *savmostudio.com*).

Shweta Marathe, our chapter correspondant from Mumbai, provided us with the screenshot, appearing on page one (along with the beautiful, underused ASIFA letters she created for the coffee break).

And then, just like that, it was time for more coffee in June!



Again, from the very busy David Thrasher

June 2024 Coffee Notes

Hot-off-the-wire service from our battlefield correspondent, Michael Long of Webster University

David Thrasher dropped in first and tried out his new condenser mic (sounds good). He explained how he's been working on upgrading the audio for the animated coffee opening.

After more folks arrived, he played the latest version of "Let's All Go to the Lobby," with midi tones carrying the melody.

Vivi shared a "white hot pepper" cover illustration from a children's book she did for a client (wonderful illustrations!). Then, she started us on a discussion of how to know what ideas to pursue, how do you choose the right one and keep developing the story? Do you make the animation to please yourself, or to please an audience? Big, deep topics!

Steve observed that we're not the novelists of animation (like Pixar or other big studios) – we're *poets*, and often you remember poetry better for its concise, compact, intense effect and resonance.

(Orin felt unwell, alas, and had to leave early, before we got to here about his latest projects.) Shweta M is working on an animated project – a personal, animated documentary. It's not at the stage where she can talk about it yet, but she's doing a lot of pre-production work on a complicated topic. We hope she'll share it with us when she's ready.

Bob, who likes face-to-face board games, is preparing for a sabbatical next year on writing and developing games, partly using open source materials. He's also looking forward to animation projects once he's retired.

For those who weren't around for our pandemic zooms, I shared links to the group projects we did then: *Spiritus Mundi* and the *Animated New Year's cards for 2021*.

Note: Next month's coffee zoom falls on July 4th, a US holiday, so we'll probably reschedule that month for Wed. July 3rd.

Around the world with ASIFA Central - David from Iowa, Michael from Missouri, Vivi from Greece via the UK, Steve from the wilds of mid-Michigan, Orrin holding down the fort in Indiana, Dr. Bob from an undisclosed location in downtown Grand Rapids, and Shweta from the longest address ever created for a studio in Mumbai, India!

Meet A New Member - Madison Goetsch

Madison Goetsch of GVSU is a new student member with ASIFA Central, by way of Julie Goldstein. Her student film, Shimmy On, Starlet, will be part of this chapter's IAD celebratory showreel this fall. She settled down at her keyboard to ask the usual painful questions from yr humbl typst.

Madison Goetsch of GVSU

1. Recollections from an animated youth:

"The first animated film I remember watching was The Little Mermaid when I was about four. Throughout my life I've been fascinated by the ocean, so that definitely played into my obsession. I did also have a very strong attachment to Ariel's character, particularly in her mermaid form. I spent the rest of my childhood wishing I could be a mermaid (ironically, the reverse of Ariel's character, rc). I watched The Little Mermaid at least once per day from ages 4-6, probably due to my admiration for Ariel (more recently, however, I've rewatched the animated series Arcane around 5 times. The way it combines 3D and 2D is absolutely fascinating to me–not to mention, the story is great).

"When I was in late middle school, I encountered the short films made by Calarts students through YouTube. I loved watching them and started hoping that I would eventually have an opportunity to do the same sort of project in college (which I did!).

"I come from an illustration background, so I was never too interested in making a live action film myself. The ways that animation can naturally bend reality depending on the art style has always appealed to me.

"At that age (middle school), I had no confidence in my ability to learn animation on paper, so I held off on animating until I got an iPad as a sophomore in college. In retrospect, I do wish I had started earlier with those materials because of the unique effect of paper animation...there weren't any specific channels I followed–I just soaked up whatever information I could. In my junior year of college is when I took my first of three animation classes taught by Julie Goldstein."

2. Influences and Attractions to The Genre

"The Disney films I grew up on were definitely a major inspiration style-wise, but Phineas and Ferb was the first animated show that made me curious about the animation process. I remember asking my mom how the characters were always drawn the same from scene to scene (her answer: "a lot of practice."), and from there I started drawing my favorite characters consistently.

"There's definitely [the aspect] of anticipation–because the medium doesn't have to follow the laws of nature, you never know exactly how far the animation will push natural boundaries... I do think there's a general misconception in American audiences that animation is for kids, but some recent series such as Arcane and Blue Eye Samurai are shifting that perception, alongside anime becoming more mainstream. My friends and I alwa lik t anal z t color c mer angle an character designs within an animated film or ser es because many of us are artists or are at least immersed in the art world. Being able to watch films either analytically or for pure entertainment is definitely fascinating, and opens up new ways to perceive the same film."

3. Media and Methods

"Drawing frame by frame digitally was the first medium I explored, but I have also dabbled in zoetropes and a bit of clay and Lego stop motion. (I am) still drawing frame by frame digitally! I think it aligns most closely with my illustration style and allows me to express my ideas more clearly than other mediums. Because I grew up on Disney films and other 2D animated cartoons, frame by frame has always been the most familiar medium to me."

4. Software of Choice and The Education Arc

"(For software,) Procreate (the original version, not Procreate Dreams), mainly because it's also what I use for illustration, so I was already familiar with the software. (At GVSU), my Animation 2 class, where we created individual short films, was probably the most beneficial. I also received

feedback from Film & Video majors (who made up most of the class), and their suggestions opened my eyes to avenues newer to my usual way of thinking, which is heavily tied to illustration. I started to become more intentional with my cinematography, rather than just trying to make things look pretty for pretty's sake.

"The film program as a whole would showcase student work at the end of the semester, which animation was a part of. The short film I made for my Animation 2 class was one of the most rewarding projects I've ever done, and I've already started making plans to animate another. With full creative power, you can quite literally do anything with animation, and that is a freeing reality."

5. Careers, Future Options, and Creating Soundtracks

"If not an animator - illustration! If it had to be outside the visual arts, however, I think creative writing would still be rewarding. Some illustrators incorporate small animated elements into otherwise still images, or on their websites. Creative writing plus animation has clear pathways to film, but I also think animated online zines or webcomics are an interesting combination.

"So far, (my music has) been whatever is copyright free! Generally, I come up with the visuals first and find music to match it. This wasn't too much of a challenge for my short film Shimmy On, Starlet! because much of the 1920s jazz I was seeking was already public domain."

Speaking of Public Domain

(thank you, Madison, for that convenient seg-way)

Y r hmbl typst continues to add to the online material of public domain music, both at archive.org and asifa.org. The latest acquisition to the archives is a 16 volume set of LPs from 1958 - "The Standard Treasury of the World's Great Music." This grocery store answer to the *Funk-and-Wagnall's* encyclopedia offered a library of classical recordings for $1.30 each, with the extra advantage of being pressed so that everything could be played in "one four-record stack" with those new-fangled High Fidelity turntables. However, there's a thing about the performances - they were completely anonymous! (The explanation was that "our great performers are under contract to others" so the records cannot be distributed "through music stores.") The best guess is that the producers had made bootlegs of some of the earliest reel-to-reel recordings from the late 1940s, which apparently never had their copyrights renewed (certainly this "Standard Treasury" never did).

The Mystery of Music

It is likely the masters hailed from post-WWII Europe, and some of the performances do exhibit a chaotic need for speed (missed cues, random early brass section note). But once transferred and edited, they'll be added to the audio data bases, adjusted for proper speed when necessary (the *Egmont Overture* sounded like overly medicated dinner music). Not stereo - but FREE! Stay tuned!

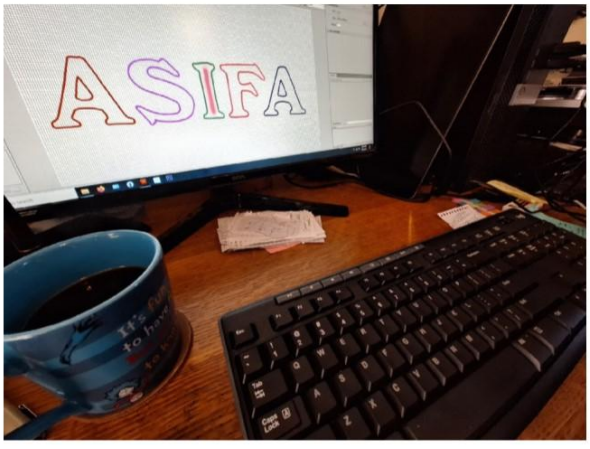
Website Stats - Stated

For May

Visitors 198
Views 262
Welcome Page - 203 views
Membership process - 10 views
PD and sound - 9 views
Fall 1995 and Fall 1986 newsletters were particularly scrutinized and downloaded from the US, from France, and from Italy

Deanna and Suzanne Make a Movie! Jim Doodles.

D u r i n g the May coffee, Deanna was gathering video greetings for her upcoming ASIFA co-production for our International assembly of chapter representatives, enlisting ASIFA Central member Suzanne Zack as additional creative eyes and editorial mastery of WAVs, AVIs, and MPs with any number you choose following.



Jim Middleton provided a few moments of animation along with edited snippets of public domain music. The short film celebrates the importance of the volunteers who keep ASIFA viable and vital. We give it our all, and our "I" is fed by the whole!

Time to move our vowels - The "I" in ASIFA is "U"!!

The film, "Why I Volunteer for ASIFA" will be made available in the months ahead, because the thing about volunteers is - well, let's say we wear out before we rust out!

RIFF in New York - Jim takes a Canadian Shortcut for COFFEE CRISP!

The Rochester International Film Festival (RIFF) hit birthday #66 this June, and yr hmbl typst was invited to attend with the recently completed *Sfumato #2, Political Asylum*. It was a generous offer on their part, including tours of Kodak and RIT's MAGIC Studio. In a word, YIPES. The pandemic had created a battalion of mostly cosmetic "festivals," often little more than anonymously judged affairs with a possible showplace in someone's basement. RIFF is hardly one of those festivals.

The eight hours of showings, in four separate sections, represented a full phalanx of film genres, and five animated films made the cut. The venue was the Eastman Museum Dryden Theatre – air conditioned, soft-seated comfort with a goodly sized screen accustomed to running rarities from the Eastman archives. There was no admission charge (donations always accepted), the audience was of several strata from in and around the Rochester area, and the animated films included two from students at Daeman University, one from a senior lecturer at RIT, one from the director of *Dragonball Z*, and...yr hmbl typst.

[Permit me to drop the third person narrative to say that I was completely stunned by the generosity and attention given me during my three days in Rochester. I was chauffeured. I was fed. I was coddled, and I'm not ever sure I know what coddled means, but boy this sure felt like coddled. I was made to feel an instantaneous part of a rare collection of filmmakers, educators, and avatars of celluloid. Whatever hesitation I had about the seven - no, make that nine - hours of driving – drat those one-lane bridge construction bottlenecks – vanished once I saw the now-nearly-empty KODAK building and my phone began exploding with a 72 hour barrage of WhatsApp welcomes and communication. If you have a film, and if you can only enter one festival, this is the one to enter.]

Pockets checked before leaving

Between the showings came tours of the evaporating Kodak company, the melancholy of walking past George Eastman's rather neglected tomb, the discovery that the fourth floor of the old research building is now rented to a pot farm (oh yeah, that isn't Kodachrome you're smelling), and that the

Mr. Eastman's final resting place needs a trim

MAGIC was - magic

folks who made my Tri-X Super 8mm film are resurrecting their formula to market a boutique Super 8mm camera for $5500, without a single-frame function, with the 3 minute cartridge selling for $50, with an additonal $100 for developing and creating a digital transfer.

Whatever nostalgia was shattered was replaced the next day with a welcome rush of optimism and exaltation in the form of the RIT and its MAGIC program. Where many 2-4 year film programs are beset with administrative budget crunches that can challenge keeping their infrastructure current, yet alone looking forward, MAGIC (acronym for Media Art Games Interaction Creativity) provides students with cross-training among several curricula, "speed-dating" with students at the Rochester School of Music for soundtracks, a 7000 square foot soundstage, Dolby-designed auditoriums and sound studios, and commercial productions to pack many a portfolio. It was enough to make one dive onto Nintendo Switch to play *That Damn Goat,* the MAGIC-produced video game released May 15.

Thali of India - magic!

These chairs - not magic - creativity has its limits!

TO SUMMARIZE - THE RIFF IS ON FILM FREEWAY, AND YOU NEED TO CATCH THEIR ATTENTION!!!!!

Sidebar - The "New Kodak"

The new Kodak Super 8mm film camera is not your grandfather's (or your father's) Kodak. Anticipated and delayed for several years, its appearance was expected to combine nostalgia with production utility. It's price kept creeping upward with each announcement of its progress. While one never expected the $19.95 FunSaver box kit from 1968, the final price tag of $5500 remained rather shocking.

Even so, it's on a several-month backorder - they cannot keep up with the orders

The RIFF attendees were able to inspect a "show model" during the company tour, and it made a nice, familiar sound as the cartridge was exposed in its newly re-engineered feeding mechanism, and the digital viewfinder created the illusion of a modern portable video camera. But it is still a 50 foot cartridge. It is likely the reason for the surge of manufactured "retro footage" in recent films - you've seen the shots, soon to be a cliche of documentaries of the 2020s, with the oddly framed images, suggesting found footage from the past, served up with a side of flickering sprocket holes.

In the 1979s, the cartridges were $3-4, two-day developing for another $3, and you received a 50 foot roll of Kodachrome that would run through the projector in about three minutes. And then the editing started, culling that 50 feet into a couple of yards of useable material (you learned to think and plan before you pushed that sweet, ASMR-worthy button). The cartridges now cost $38 each for Plus-X B/W, $49 for Ektachrome (no more Kodachrome, with its aroma of delicious vegetable dyes when you pierced the foil packaging). For developing, expect another C-note to cover the process and whatever digital format you want provided for your editing files.

Yr hmbl typst personal preference for Super 8mm, ca 1972

Significantly, it, has no single-frame function. 18fps, 24fps, 36fps only.

I'd classify this as a boutique camera, for films with bigger budgets than most of us experience.

The need to show sprockets is also interesting - that wasn't the purpose ever with home movies in the

pre-video era. You winced back then if you could see a splice (Guillotine splicers were the slicer of choice for yr humbl typst, and even those weren't helpful for staccato montage work).

It was nice to see Kodak at least trying to keep film alive ("If you want the look of film, shoot film!"), but it only made me want to go on Ebay, score a replacement for a long-lost Bolex 160, and reserve its use for very, very special occasions - thinking like my mom, who wouldn't take pictures of our UFO encounter in the UP back the'60s, because "there's color film in that Instamatic - I'm saving it for good!"

Digital effects in an editing suite can approximate the same look, and it will remain only an approximation, but go easy on showing off the sprocket holes, ok?

"Full Format Overscan" from Negativeland - the new visual cliché for the 2020s? - Super 8mm master

By the Way, Have We Mentioned that Bill Plympton Has Created the Poster for the 2024 IAD?

Seems it has been a while since brining it up..

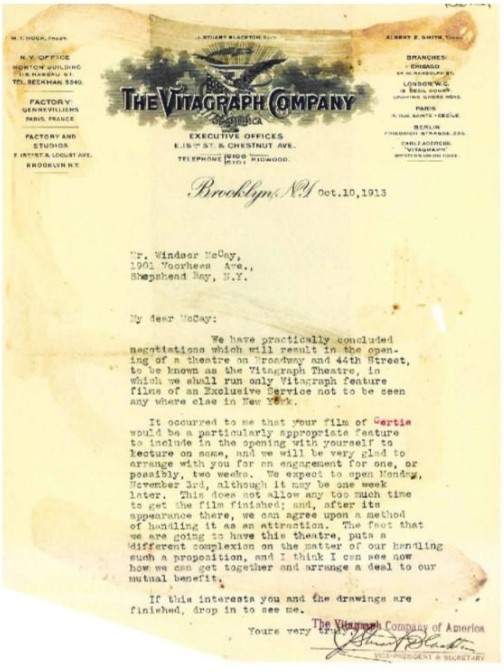
image from NPR

Winsor McCay Department

Presentations and Artifacts

First of all, an ARTIFACT, to wit:

A letter between J. Stuart Blackton and Winsor McCay



THE VITAGRAPH COMPANY OF AMERICA

EXECUTIVE OFFICES
E. 15TH ST. & CHESTNUT AVE.

Brooklyn, N.Y. Oct.10,1913

Mr. Windsor McCay,
1901 Voorhees Ave.,
Shepshead Bay, N.Y.

My dear McCay:

We have practically concluded negotiations which will result in the opening of a theatre on Broadway and 44th Street, to be known as the Vitagraph Theatre, in which we shall run only Vitagraph feature films of an Exclusive Service not to be seen any where else in New York.

It occurred to me that your film of Gertie would be a particularly appropriate feature to include in the opening with yourself to lecture on same, and we will be very glad to arrange with you for an engagement for one, or possibly, two weeks. We expect to open Monday, November 3rd, although it may be one week later. This does not allow any too much time to get the film finished; and, after its appearance there, we can agree upon a method of handling it as an attraction. The fact that we are going to have this theatre, puts a different complexion on the matter of our handling such a proposition, and I think I can see now how we can get together and arrange a deal to our mutual benefit.

If this interests you and the drawings are finished, drop in to see me.

Yours very truly,
The Vitagraph Company of America

It reads, from an era predating spell-check,

"The VITAGRAPH COMPANY, Oct. 10, 1913
Mr. Winsor McCay
1901 Voorhees Ave
Shepshead Bay, NY

My dear McCay:

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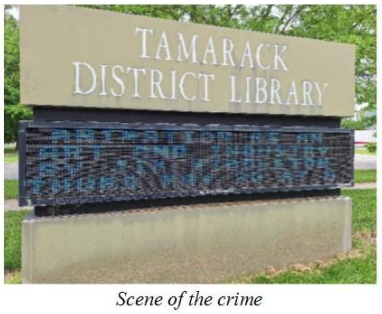
If this interests you and the drawings are finished, drop in to see me.

Yours very truly,
J. Stuart Blackton
The Vitagraph Company of America"

Even Winsor McCay had deadline pressures...

Second of All, the Presentation:



Scene of the crime

At the end of this past May, a few miles from the scampering grounds of the teenager whose uncle still spelled his name *McKay*, yr hmbl typst introduced the *Godfather of All Things Animated* to a small, but interested, group of Tamarack Library afficionados. One young lady in attendance had also attended my old high school (back when the building was new, to me, but "oldish" to her), and said after graduation, she went to Japan to study, and returned a few years later with some extended homework, namely, a husband from Japan.

Her husband was an enthusiastic anime fan, and likely could have told me what Miyazaki had for breakfast, but had never heard of McCay, nor of Little Nemo, nor of the aborted project that Studio Ghibli had attempted in the mid-1980s.

He did get to see some of the animation cels from the final degenerated product that made it to the US screens in the 1990s, because, well, years ago yr humbl typst had purchased a couple at a wildly discounted price, and the seller, seemingly glad for the opportunity to reduce inventory, sent several dozen cels, along with the original drawings, a handful of watercolor and poster paint backgrounds, in a traveling envelope that went to the various homes around the studio where after-hours families painted the cels, according to the guidelines on the envelope.

The presentation was a quick overview of McCay's work, then a timeline of his impact on films that followed - from pushing the primitive product of pre-WWI into grudging adolescence, to inspiring films first by Edwin S. Porter, then Victor Fleming (*pre-Wizard of Oz*), to animation references of lobster nightmares, ultimately tracing a path to Lionel Ritchie's *Dancin On the Ceiling* and an over-plotted variation of Nemo as a girl on Netflix.

As one would have said in an earlier area weekly newspaper, "A good time was had by all." One suspects it was because there wasn't a quiz afterwards. One suspects.

Animated Thoughts: My Love Affair with Marriage

Chuck Wilson REVIEWS!

(From his blog of Tuesday, February 20, 2024, http://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com

Well, I saw My Love Affair With Marriage at the Flint Institute of Art. Having done promotional work on both of Signe's features, it's a real rush to sit in the theater and see the final product--even moreso to see your name in the credits as one of the financial backers of the film. And I have to say it was a very enjoyable movie, but more than that, it was very thought provoking. Given the litany of "advice" family and friends have given me about marriage over my lifetime, I spent more than a little time pondering issues raised by the movie on the drive home.

Though one initial question that crossed my mind as I walked out of the theater was related to how Signe puts a lot of herself into her films. In her animated short The Dentist, Signe drew upon her experiences having some dental surgery in order to create a spine-tingling film. In Birth, she drew upon her experience of becoming a new mother and how advice given isn't always as helpful as one would hope. In watching My Love Affair With Marriage, I do have to wonder how many of the situations the character Zelma found herself

in were drawn from Signe's own life experiences... or drawn from experiences related to her by family and friends?

For me though, *My Love Affair With Marriage* raised some very interesting (uncomforable?) situations as it confronted the stories we are told about marriage. For example: how you are not a complete person without someone there to complete you. Or, how we over-romanticize marriage and childrearing while ignoring the realities of said experiences. Now I'm not anti-marriage or anti-children, far from it. I'm a big supporter of both if for no other reason than how families can add stability to society and children provide for society's longevity. But oftentimes, being married and having children is portrayed in culture as the be-all and end-all of the human experience and your existence is empty and meaningless if you're single--a concept that I've been striving against for the better part of my life.

The very real question that I've been pondering lately is: is the desire to get married something that you want for yourself or do you only feel that desire because it's "expected" of you?

And that's where I found myself as I watched Zelma's trials and tribulations as she wandered through life as a single woman, and then in life as a married woman. Throughout this film, Signe asked the questions and confronted the sacred cows of marriage and the decision to have a child (or not) in a very entertaining fashion – but without fully answering them, always leaving room for speculation based upon your personal experiences.

Signe is masterful at weaving the triumphs and failures of the human experience into very interesting and engaging characters who leave you wanting more. Despite all the difficulties she faced through childhood, adolescence, and finally adulthood, the film struck this hopeful tone as Zelma walked a path to finding peace in her relationships. As Zelma grew, I wondered if maybe she would realize that she doesn't "have" to be married in order to live a life filled with meaning and purpose--a realization that many of us single people look for: that particular moment of clarity when you really start living and enjoying your life in the moment instead of chasing after some highly-romanticized vision of the future that society says you must have.

Or maybe marriage was the key to happiness for Zelma after all, once she finds the right person with whom she can share the rollercoaster of life. Maybe her personal happiness could only be found in sharing her life with another person, and it would take her a series of failed relationships to finally grow into the person she needed to be in order to share her life with someone else? I'll leave it up to you readers to watch the film for yourselves and see how the story ends for Zelma... or maybe doesn't end. Every apparent end for Zelma is just the beginning of another chapter in her story (including the ones we don't get to see). Regardless, after the movie ended, I did have the feeling that it would be nice to check in with Zelma in about five or ten years and see how life turned out for her. For by the end of the film, Zelma felt like less of a character in a story and more like a friend or a family member who you only saw every couple of years but pick the friendship right back up where you left off.

As one of the Crowdfunding backers, I'm really looking forward to receiving my copy of the film and watching it again since I not only enjoyed the story but I also really enjoyed the visuals in this movie. I was very drawn to the segments where the neuron narrator "Biology" (expertly voice acted by Michele Pawk) ran us through these mini documentaries detailing how the brain matures and processes emotions through biochemical networks before the film went back to Zelma's external story. Then there were the many examples of Signe's "digital setback camera" process--a digital evolution of Max Fleischer's setback camera setup that I wouldn't mind trying myself someday.

Signe continues to push the bar on her personal work, as *My Love Affair With Marriage* added a large number of musical numbers to the feature. And, while this film is drawn in her own signature visual style, you can see Signe pushing her drawing and animating skills forward and improving in both the 2D rendering of her

human characters as well as the more abstract figures she presented in the neurological characters and processes seen in the microscopic brain sequences.

All-in-all, Signe has added another interesting and entertaining film to the growing pantheon of adult-oriented animated features and is well worth a look, whether you want to be inspired or if you just want to be entertained. Given how approachable and relatable this film was to my own experiences with interpersonal relationships, I can't wait to see what concepts Signe decides to tackle for her next feature.

If you'd like to know more about Signe's process, I highly recommend watching the following presentation she gave at the University of Michigan/Ann Arbor screening of her film. Additionally, she's has some wonderful production process pages on her website: https://www.myloveaffairwithmarriagemovie.com where she covers the setwork, animation, and shows some presentation and interview videos – great stuff for the aspiring animator.

Interview link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggJM6uMYxbc&t=2s

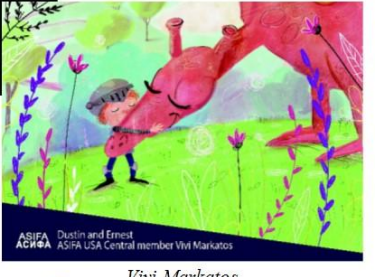
(Images from Signe's presskit, copyright Signe Baumane)

Postcards from the Hedge

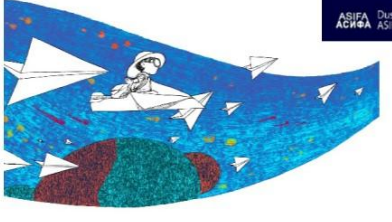
ASIFA Central is well Represented!

(Bundles are being made available to animation and film festivals as 2024 progresses – there will be postcards at OIAF in September!)

Deanna Morse



Vivi Markatos



Shweta Marathe

With another international card program coming soon!

Peaches Wilczak

Some Retired Pharmacist in Edmore

The China Syndrome
– or –
The Geek Shall Inherit the Earth

Hong Kong-based Seminars attended by yr hmbl typst

[First of all, one thing to remember is that an 8***am*** presentation in Hong Kong is the *previous night's* 8***pm*** here in the mid-reaches of Michigan. It took a few attempts to get both my mind and watch synchronized to this fact, with a few missed online encounters in between. Repeat to yourself, "8am in Hong Kong on Thursday morning is 8pm in Edmore on *Wednesday* night" until you fall into a confused slumber. Yr hmbl typst may need to engage with a tattoo artist to cement this mental conundrum to the inside of his eyelids.]

There are two books that represent the foundation of these discussions, (1) *Anime's Knowledge Cultures* by Jinying Li, and (2) *Animated Encounters* by Dr. Daisy Du. The online discussion ran 45 minutes, with time for follow-up questions, and English has not been spoken that rapidly since my last visit to an old phonograph auction.

It boils down to this: in 1980, when China began to open up, the first commercial broadcasting allowed on state television came from Japan, and it came from Japan in the form of the 1960s animated series, *Astro Boy*, sponsored by Casio and Toshiba. This series sparked an overwhelming influx of color televisions into the Chinese market, helped by the foresight of the series' producers to have the series translated into Mandarin.

Astro-Boy had 100,000 horsepower, he was a boy of science, possessed the might of the atom, and to the directed audience, represented the "transnational myth of Techno-Utopia."

For comparison, Milton Berle burst onto NBC's Texaco Star Theatre in 1948, and America couldn't get enough television sets to watch a man in a dress crack jokes.

A Techno-Utopia driven by Casio watches and Astro-Boy seems almost a subplot from the *Men In Black* franchise. But according to these books, and some general observations, it appears anime and *Astro-Boy* are societal driving forces among the 50 year-and-younger strata of the population in China.

In addition to all that, they have quickly absorbed the culture of anime, proudly embracing the term "geek" in parallel with the rest of Asia and the US.

Geek = Utako (Japan) = Zhai (China)

> [As a point of comparison - there were always the terms "geek" and "nerd" in my misspent youth, both were derogatory, with the best definition at the time being, "A geek bites the heads off chickens, a nerd will tell you how many calories it will take." It gave time to dash off while the football goon was thinking, and avoid a swirly. By the way, it's 17 calories.]

Astro-Boy created such a fondness for anime that China seemed almost too happy to take on providing the animation for Japanese productions. Now, with years of experience in the craft, China-based productions are hiring Japanese animators, because, well, it seems Japanese animators are cheaper.

Ultimately, if all this bears out (these two books are laden with phrases like, "an imagined geocultural region that is constituted by the transnational, transmedial networks," so it's not a casual read), it would behoove our State Department to dive into the *Astro Boy* library. It could be a shortcut in understanding what motivates such a devoted following in a population of 1.4 billion.

"Watch this space." Or *Astro-Boy.*

Festival News from Europe, Canada, and the Rejection of 4K, Because - Well, 8 Bits is Just Good Enough

2K or not 2K...4K or not 4K. How about 0.25K? There is a slight blowback on the craving for mega-resolution film files, perhaps as another bit of nostalgia for the days of Super 8mm (even 16mm film has an 8K+ level of information, according to the kids at Kodak), so a few festivals have been appearing that set file limits on the entry uploads, seeing *how low you can go* (I recall Bri Yarhouse showing an early Flash animation that ran for about a minute with under 50K of file space, to the astonishment of the audience), as if reminiscing for the days of dial-up internet and *Happy Tree Friends.*

The *Small File Media Festival*, presented over sixty international works at a recent showing, in cooperation with Canada's Cinematheque. Described as "small in file size, but huge in impact," they embrace the "aesthetics" of compression and low resolution (glitchiness and unintended pixelation) to lay the foundation for experimental films.

"Why small files? Because streaming media is killing the planet! Streaming comprises a significant chunk of the world's digital carbon footprint," says their website. Their file limits? No more than 1.44 megabytes per minute, with TikTok a blunderbuss by comparison, at 70 megabytes per minute.

"Cosmically healthy, community-building, and punk AF, small-file ecomedia will heal the world, one pixel at a time."

It seems rather niche, but then, yr huml typst is still intrigued about mechanical television from the 1920s...

https://thecinematheque.ca

Featured on Disney +

Jim Henson, Idea Man, a documentary directed by Opie Taylor, is worth a look to appreciate the creative genius behind the Muppets and confirm the importance of timely medical care.

And *What If?*, proof that the Marvel Universe is better in 20 minute animated doses, enters its second season, remaining a goddess-send for those with little time to invest in three-hour SFX sprees.

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Occasionally Bothersome Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) June, 2024, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at
https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.

Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!

As the 50 year anniversary of ASIFA Central approaches, feel free to offer suggestions for material for the commemorative book
jim.middletonrx@gmail.com

There was so much more material for this issue, but space-time is so elusive!

Many thanks to everyone for their contributions!

ASIFA Central

July-August *"IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!"* 2024 AoDi

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

Our Dazzling President
Julie Goldstein

A Pristine Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and Spectacular International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

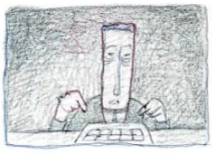
Dashing Social Media Coordinators and Chapter Ambassadors:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

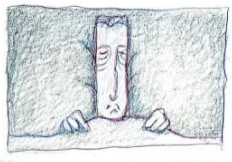
Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Frequently Bothersome Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Frisky, Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse!
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge!
Stephen Leeper!
Michael Long!
Bob Swieringa!
Charles Wilson!

Retreat Outline Coming SOON! - we're ironing out some scheduling challenges.

IAD Anijam Project - *Contribution Deadline October 1, 2024*





Members should, by now, have received an email from *yr hmbl typst* for this year's IAD 2024 Poster Anijam Project. It boils down to an exercise in morphing one image from Bill Plympton's poster into the next, with the universe at your feet for a roadmap. Here is a rough "pencil test" example on my blog - https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com/2024/07/post-683-another-concurrent-exercise.html

1. Submit the graphic files (or even a complete mp4/avi if you are so inclined, but certainly not necessary) to jim.middletonrx@gmail.com - a dropbox file is being created as well, if your images are too much for your server - details on that in a future email.

2. I'm looking at an October 1, 2024 deadline to give me time to stitch things together for the IAD itself.

3. The image files here are in the standard 1920x1080 size, so if you could keep your work in that frame size, that'd be fantastic. Otherwise, I'll be converting the images to that size and that may put a warp to your original intent. Fair warning!

4. I should be able to handle the type of file you provide (ie jpg, png, etc), but would prefer jpg at this point.

5. The image process - Start with one image and migrate into the next. How you get there and how many frames you take is up to you. I usually set my editor for creating an "on-twos" sort of animation.

6. Put your initials as part of your files, too, along with an identifier of the segment, "ie - JM1-2segment.jpg" I'll be building folders for each sub-mission to keep track with them at this end.

7. If your contribution is very brief (10-12 drawings, for example), I will probably stretch things out and do a *Man Who Planted Trees* type of dissolve between them, so viewers can fully view and appreciate your astonishing visual acumen..

8. Let me know how you want your name to appear at the conclusion of this opus. I don't want to sabotage any witness relocation programs.

ASIFA
INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION DAY
2024

In the Meantime, In Between Time,
Ain't We Got ASIFA Coffee!
July 3rd Edition
yr hmbl typst at the keyboard

Some of the rowdies who gathered on July 3 - Michael Long, YrHmblYpst, Deanna Morse, Kobi Wright, David Thrasher, Jane Flint, Vivi Markatos, Chris Sullivan - not pictured, but with palpable enthusiasm were Orrin Scott from the SAS in AUSTRALIA, and Bob Swieringa, still the TALLEST ANIMATOR IN MICHIGAN!

A new membership prospect, primed for corruption by this insidious lot, was impressionable Kobi Wright, a recent grad from GVSU, and a fan of impressionism, and that was just our impression, as he gave us no impressions, but he could do a good impression of a recent grad from GVSU. A recent grad fluent in Japanese! Five years! Anime-zing! Bring on *Blue Robot Cat!!!*

+ *The existing collective failed to frighten him away, and he happily joined into the fray.* + Animation is like that. More hands in the pie doesn't make less pie, just more meringue (and nobody has any idea what that even means).

OK, the Celsius is wearing off. Here's what really transpired, only slightly less surreal than what just happened in the previous paragraphs.

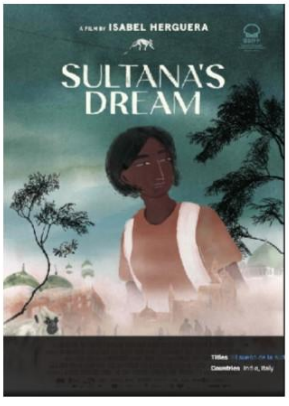
News around the coffee urn:

18 submissions thus far for the IAD celebration on FilmFreeway.

Jane Flint stated she is "sort of retired." HA! It's in *your blood*, your *very soul! Animators never retire - they just shoot on fours and fix it in post!*

Vivi Markatos is now a solid part of the British mainland - she and her fiancé are *with house!* Oh the pitty-pat of little mortgage payments. She continues to do a *lot* of work for her homeland county, Greece, but expects her 90 minutes from London will bring more anglophillic activity. She is looking to enhance her sketchability with retro animated characters (thinking of *Pink Panther* and *Gerald McBoing Boing* as retro brings a chill to the caffeinated boomers)

Chris Sullivan expects to have *Orbits of Minor Satellites* set for release in time for the ASIFA Central retreat in 2025. A delicious expectation. He also suggests exploring *Robot Dreams, Flow,* and *Away.*



Chris is also experimenting with midi and mic-based electronic sounds using a bit of new technology- *Nightsky* - that actually sports KNOBS! (But can it dial up to "11"?)

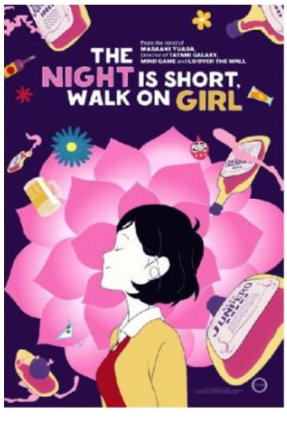
Deanna Morse has been making the international circuits, reporting that India's *Sultana's Dream* and Adam Elliot's *Memoir of a Snail* were particular favorites at Annecy this past season.

Bri Yarhouse reports that *Animators for Peace* is working on 8-30 second pieces for an international project. More on that to come!

Vivi's new neighbors - but her plumbing is much nicer

Also, programs are in development to create tighter communication among the ASIFA chapters in the US with the hopes of establishing cross-platform membership benefits. This is in its neophyte stage of implementation after several years of discussion. As part of this expansion, asifa.net is in the process of re-opening member profile bios. There have been some challenges in the wordpress platform for user access recently (gee-yr hmbl typst is talking about his Bolex 160 super 8mm macrozoom, in his bio there - yeah, time for an update)

Richard Williams' *Animation Survival Kit* book now has an app, and his accompanying 16 DVD disc set is appearing in online sales sites (at a substantially lower price).



Jane Flint brought up *Night Is Short, Walk On Girl* 's Japanese theatrical release poster with the name *Kanji* , and the literal meaning being, *The night* is *but short, so walk on, maiden*. The things one loses in translation. (director Masaaki Yuasa also created *Mind Game and Adventure Time's "Food Chain"*) A comedy about one epic night in Kyoto, where a sophomore known only as "The Girl with Black Hair" experiences a series of surreal encounters with the local nightlife; the director also created the film *Transcriptions* and *Tatemi Galaxy,* which is on the tubes of you: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kq7O6eR12oM

Chris Sullivan also presented the group with Alan Kwan, amazing game developer, animator, and technologist - https://www.kwanalan.com/

Deanna Morse also has a new website! www.deannamorse.com - And the film by Deanna, Suzanne Zack, with animation by yr hmbl typst is on vimeo: https://vimeo.com/951382514

Piotr Kardas has completed this year's O!PLA from Poland, another great feature for IAD

And then the coffee ran out!!! Until August!!!

Analytical and Articulatory Animation Analyses

Supplement to ASIFA Central Newsletter Series - July 2024

Animated Thoughts: What I've been watching this season

By Charles Wilson

https://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com

As time marches on, I've been watching more and more Anime television series. Personally, I find that a lot of the stories are more engaging for people in my "middle-age" demographic. Fortunately though, we have been seeing an uptick in animated shows geared for the more mature viewer here in the States, mostly through streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime (see: *Invincible*, *Critical Role*, and *Love, Death & Robots*). However, I do still see us walking a long road before we witness Brad Bird's view of animation fully realized in the American consciousness as it appears to have already done so in Japan. As Mr. Bird so eloquently said back in 2015: "Animation is an art form and it can do any genre"--including stories for the middle-aged crowd.

Hence, my watching a lot of Anime. Of course, Anime is not immune to the overuse of certain tropes, like "the harem/reverse harem". And everyone chases trends. Here in the States, it's been "superheroes" for quite a while. In Japan, "the overpowered protagonist who wakes up in an alternate world" continues to be all the rage. Now don't get me wrong, some of the shows with those tropes and trends can work and can work pretty well--see: *Is it Wrong to try to Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon?* (both the *Familia Myth* and *Sword Oratoria* storylines), the *Sword Art Online/Gun Gale Online* series and movies, or the "Certain" series: *A Certain Magical Index*, *A Certain Scientific Railgun*, and *A Certain Scientific Accelerator*. But from time-to-time you do get the feeling of "been-there, done-that."

More often than not, before every season starts I'll make a list of six or seven shows that I want to take a look at and see if they're worth following through to completion. My plan allows for viewing the first two (maybe three) episodes to see if they're worth my time and the list gets culled as the season progresses.

I have to say: this past season had some pretty solid entries into the market. I ended up paring my list down from around ten to five--though of those ten, there are two that I do plan on going back and finishing later this year.

The series on my 'must see' list ended up being: *Train to the End of the World*, *HIGHSPEED Etoile*, *Kaiju No. 8*, and *BARTENDER Glass of God* (all streamed on Crunchyroll) and *Delicious in Dungeon* (streamed on NetFlix). The two "honorable mentions" that I plan on finishing were *A Sign of Affection* and *Obsolete*--though both of those shows were from prior seasons, streamed on Crunchyroll and YouTube respectively.

https://youtu.be/f244r8O8HgY

Train to the End of the World Now, you might think from the trailer that this is one of those stereotypical 'cute girls doing cute things' Anime. Well, you'd be wrong! From the opening sequences, this Anime takes a hard left turn into the surreal. The whole story follows four girls (and their dog) as they take a train from their home town all the way to Ikebukuro in order to find one of their missing friends.

The catch here is that the entire world has gone crazy due to the implementation of "7G" wireless connectivity. But the girls are determined and hijinks ensue at every stop on the way. Now while the banter is entertaining, as is the trouble the girls find themselves in, it's the attention to facial expressions and body language, the "acting", that really makes the series work for me. No matter what challenges they face, they never cease to behave like teenage girls who are at that midpoint between childhood and maturity. And when faced with a bizarre landscape (which they'd been dealing with for two years by the time they decide to make their trek) that is filled with equally bizarre perils, over and over it's their friendship that carries them through to the end. It reminded me of the "Certain" series in that regard: kids that are thrust into an adult world, who have to solve more-or-less adult problems. But they solve those problems as you expect a child (or teenager) would, not in the manner that an adult would--even though they're trying their hardest to act mature at the time.

All-in-all, I found it to be a fun, thoroughly quirky show. From the start, you never really doubted what would happen by the end of the last episode, but it was an enjoyable journey to take. Do be warned though, it does get a little silly and a little cheeky in some spots so I wouldn't let little kids watch it.

YouTube Trailer for *HIGHSPEED Etoile*
https://youtu.be/yqp1raJNIOo

I don't like watching sports. Never have. Don't like playing them either, though I guess I can see the appeal of playing sports... kind of. But it holds no interest for me for various reasons not really relevant to this post. Now sports movies? Well those I find rather engaging. I thoroughly enjoyed the live-action car racing movie *Gran Turismo* (based upon the true story of a videogame/simulator and aspiring race car driver Jann Mardenborough)--enjoyed it so much I watched it twice. *HIGHSPEED Etoile* was another one of those entries. The initial premise was recycled: a ballerina who was sidelined by an injury gets involved in racing instead--same premise as in the Anime *Rideback* from back in 2009. The main characters from both series even have the same name. But this time it is racing in a future where a new power source allows race cars to propel themselves at a level of speed and skill never seen before. Other sci-fi tropes integrated into the show have a number of the race cars enhanced by AI as well as hologram announcers at the racetracks, a-la Vocaloids. This appears to be a 3d CGI animated show with 2d cel-shaded rendering. The character animation is pretty stiff but the racing sequences are very realistic--I mean, as realistic as they were in the live-action movie Speed Racer. Perhaps "well done" would be a better choice of words. What attracted me to this show is that Rin is not automatically good at the task she's presented with, unlike so many modern (boring) stories nowadays. No, Rin's performance behind the wheel evolves over time as it builds upon her athleticism and coordination from years of studying ballet. And while she does come off as a bit ditzy and clueless, as the show progresses, she grows as a character and loses her naiveté. Some folks might not say that this is a "must watch" show, but it "is" another fun ride. If you liked the Emile Hirsch version of *Speed Racer*, you'll probably enjoy this series.

YouTube trailer for *Kaiju No. 8*:
https://youtu.be/JwF7bhvnCxI

Kaiju No. 8 wasn't what I expected given that it was produced by Production IG, the powerhouse that brought us Ghost in the Shell. There ended up being a bit of zaniness in *Kaiju No. 8* that I found a bit off-putting. I went in expecting a serious look at a world beset by giant monsters hell-bent on destruction and the people who stood in their way--including the para-military force that destroys them and most importantly, the crews of workers that have to clean up the aftermath (and carcasses) of the Kaiju. This show struck me as something that Studio Trigger would release as visually and performance-wise it had more in common with *Kill la Kill* or *Gurren Lagaan* than *Ghost in the Shell*. I almost stopped watching three episodes in, but stuck it out and *Kaiju No.8* ended up being worth the time spent. This is a show with some great action sequences and the story ends up being one with a lot of heart as it follows a middle-aged Kaiju disposal worker in his attempts to live out his dream of becoming a member of the Anti-Kaiju Security Force. In the end, despite the show's occasional over exaggeration of Kafka Hibino's performance I found myself rooting for Kafka and looking forward to the second season.

YouTube trailer for *BARTENDER Glass of God*:
https://youtu.be/--yeqMISgEM

Bartender Glass of God is one of those shows that is a slow burn. The pacing is relaxed yet there is an underlying tension to the story. The characters and their motivations are revealed across the series--much like watching a slow-motion video of a flower blooming. It's honestly a very meditative show to watch. The story follows Ryû Sasakura, a bartender who is on a quest to mix the "Glass of God"--meaning: that perfect drink for each of his customers. The conflict comes from a hotel owner who wants him to work at his high-end hotel instead of at the bar where Ryû currently resides. And there are minor conflicts among the side characters that only serve to reveal more and more about Ryû's character and history. This show is a reboot from 2006's Bartender. I'm not sure if I like this series as much as the first one from 2006, but I would definitely say I like them both, just for different reasons.

YouTube trailer for *Delicious in Dungeon:*
https://youtu.be/n5JEoD7keVo

Now *Delicious in Dungeon* is the show I've been waiting for. I've been following the manga ever since I discovered it during a break from watching (and reading) Isekai Shokudô--or in English: Restaurant to Another World. Setting aside the fact that Isekai Shokudô is on my "must see" list of Anime, I learned about *Delicious in Dungeon* (Japanese title: *Dungeon Meishi*) when I saw it on the bookshelf while looking for the latest manga and light novel translations of Restaurant to Another World. I tried it on for size, as it looked interesting, and I was not disappointed. The story follows a number of adventurers who are trying to rescue (resurrect) one of their friends who got eaten by a red dragon at the lower levels of this magical dungeon. But with little money to work with, they are faced with the prospect of never seeing their friend again or being forced to eat the monsters they kill in order to survive the expedition. Like what the trailer suggests, this show is nice and kooky. If you're into cooking shows and Dungeons & Dragons (as I am), you'll find this a fun romp--especially when you find yourself searching out a number of YouTubers who have made recipes similar to the ones in the show. A word of warning though: while this show is very fun and looks lighthearted, as the story progresses it does get pretty deep and mysterious. There's a lot of meat there, so if you're expecting something light and fluffy from beginning to end, you might want to look elsewhere. It's a 24 episode run on Netflix and, in my opinion, is well worth the time spent. I've watched both the English sub and English dub episodes several times. I can recommend both. And if you have a minute or two to spare, I highly recommend the original animated music video made by Bump of Chicken for the song Sleep Walking Orchestra, which was used for the show's opening title sequence. YouTube link for Sleep Walking Orchestra music video: https://youtu.be/RqooLet7B2Q

Well, the season draws to a close and there's only one episode of Bartender Glass of God left for me to watch. Then once again I'll be pawing through lists of seasonal shows on Crunchyroll, Amazon Prime, Netflix, HBO Max, and Hulu as I look for those shows that not only pique my interest but hopefully become one of the rare gems that adorn my DVD collection.

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) July, 2024, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account:
https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at
https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net *- be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION*

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com *or, for dull bloggery,* https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.
Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!

ASIFA Central

October | "IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!" | 2024AoDi

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

Our Dazzling President
Julie Goldstein

A Pristine Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and Spectacular International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Dashing Social Media Coordinators and Chapter Ambassadors:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Frequently Bothersome Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Frisky, Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse!
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge!
Stephen Leeper!
Michael Long!
Bob Swieringa!
Charles Wilson!

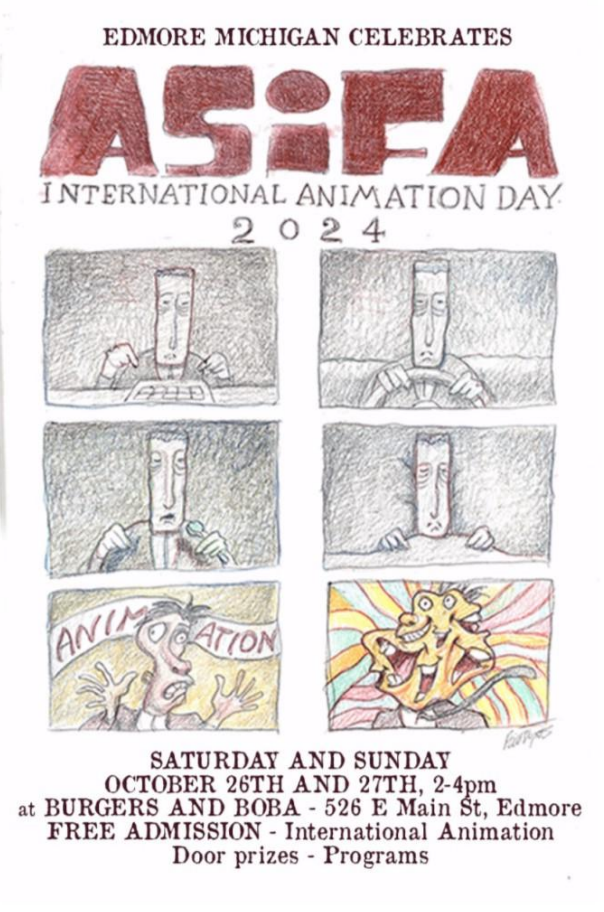
International Chapters Join Forces to Make the Days Around October 28 a Celebration of Animation!

Over 200 Short Films Submitted
Showings to Take Place Throughout the Sphere of ASIFA Central Influence

RECORD LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION FROM ASIFA CHAPTERS

60 minute - 90 minute - ASIFA Centric Members-Based Versions To Again Be Available With or Without Split Infinitives!

Program Guides and Titles Coming Soon to an Email Box Near You



Just in time to match each mouthful of A1c stimulating fructose-laden goodiness (one must taste-test before the sidewalk goblins appear, after all), the latest International Animation Day showreels will be ready for viewing this month. Specific details on access to members wanting to watch – no numbers too small nor too large – will be made available upon request after October 15. There will be three versions: a full-evening's worth at 90 minutes, a 60 minute version to fit classroom time frames, and a 30-40 minute version that focuses on ASIFA Central members.

Epigram: Oh the Bandwidth, the Bandwidth!

A SPECIAL, INCREDIBLE OFFER FROM THE GANG AT ASIFA-SAN FRANCISCO

ASIFA-SF, among the many chapters of *Association Internationale du Film d'Animation*, had hopes for a rebound with live events once the CoVid threat had passed, but according to its newsletter editor, Karl Cohen, "that isn't happening yet." To emphasize the sincerity of their convictions, they have added this notice in their October newsletter, requesting me to share with our members:

TO KEEP OUR CHAPTER ALIVE, WE NEED TO FIND VOLUNTEERS TO DEVELOP LIVE AND/OR ONLINE PROGRAMS – UNTIL THAT HAPPENS WE ARE OFFERING
FREE MEMBERSHIPS – NEW MEMBERS WANTED, SIGN UP AND RECEIVE FREE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER AND TO WHATEVER AREA SCREENINGS ASIFA-SF MEMBERS GET INVITED TO.

Contact karlcohen@earthlink.net and get your name on his monthly digital tome - often running over 20 pages (yr hmbl typst is honored to be among his proofreaders). Karl has connections *and stories*. He is author of *Forbidden Animation,* a frequent contributor to *Animation* magazine, the recipient of the ASIFA International Prize in 2008, and is nearing completion of a sweeping history of the societal impact of animation.

September Retreat Deconstruction - *My Love Affair with Marriage* - Virtual Meet with Signe Baumane - Fun with Beans, the Musical Fruit!

Signe Baumane, at work *and* play

A fitful schedule emerged for the ASIFA Central autumn retreat this year, in its somewhat truncated one-day form, amid the fluid and frantic collection of personal and professional agendas. The use of "Central" in our name had been a challenge in the past, having some members believe that the times in the program were also "central time," so after a sage smudge to clear the air, the schedule was adjusted to reflect that perception. However, that led to further confusion. It was much like a Photoshop tutorial, but eventually 11am EST (10am CST, 8am PST) arrived, right on time, on Saturday, September 7. Julie Goldstein, chapter president, provided the Zoom platform, yr hmbl typst provided his usual technical difficulties. No animators were harmed in the production of this retreat, and nobody caught digital CoVid, because you know, a screen is a terrible thing to waste.

The fully charged retreat began with some updates on the direction for the ASIFA International website, undergoing overdue revision to permit membership updates of personal biographies, to the IAD "Anijam project" making use of the ebullient poster by Bill Plympton, to progress overviews from Jim Middleton (his *Sfumata* series), Chris Sullivan (*The Orbit of Minor Satellites*, eta 2025), the breathless sabbatical of Steve Leeper (the Baltics are still a-quiver at the hands-on experiences, and Texas will never be the same after its experience with his cage-free zoetrope), and Chuck Wilson's search for historic animation on Youtube, with stunning examples from the mid-1930s to late 20th century Hanna-Barbara segments that likely met with Ralph Bakshi at a very close family reunion (*Rock Odyssey!?! - insert dropped jaw here)*.

Wave Study - Sfumato #2

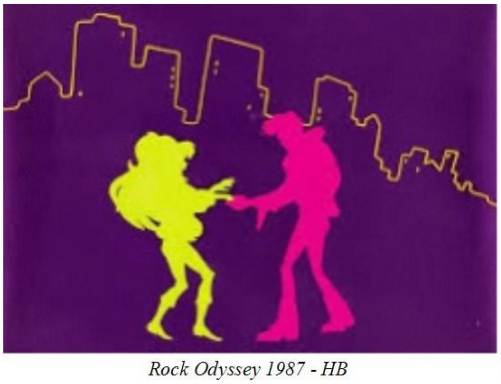
Saddle up your zoetrope, pards...

Oh the bandwidth, the bandwidth.

The featured presentation began at noon, and we discovered NOON, ***not*** 12:01pm, of Signe Baumane's second feature, *My Love Affair with Marriage,* streamed on Kinema.. In Fleischer-esque 2D/3D style, it was and remains a 90 minute ocular and auditory feast and educational sensation – where *Biology* becomes not just a subplot, but a major character. It is now available at Amazon and other retail sources, and is well worth to embrace as a great, tangible asset to one's collection.

After that 90 minutes, an additional 23 minute interview with Signe Baumane was Zoomed into our memories, recorded and edited a week before by yr hmbl typst (Ms. Baumane was a guest at a film festival in Guadalajara that weekend). She discussed the value of her primary college training in philosophy, her thoughts on sound layering, the importance of collaboration, and how Karma makes us do "the same stupid shit until you learn your lesson." She also promised the interviewer that she wouldn't clean off her desk, ever.

Orbit of Minor Satellites, expected in 2025



Rock Odyssey 1987 - HB

Then came the beans – raw, uncooked, dry, rolly-polly, slide-under-the-desk-until-the-next-vacuum-experience *beans*. Beans became the food during the pandemic to hoard, because, well, you'll always have *something* to eat if you have a cupboard stuffed with dried beans.

So the beans were brought out into the fresh air, or at least the different air of the various participants, and used to blend one image to the next of Bill Plympton's majestic poster, conveniently configured to resemble a pre-built storyboard. Everyone proved by the end that they knew

their beans, or in the case of *International ASIFA President* Deanna Morse, that Skittles make not only a reasonable substitute, but also a rather convincing rainbow soup.

Of *course* the footage will be incorporated into the ever-evolving IAD "Anijam Project" because, as you'll learn in the later segment on OIAF, it's important for independent animators to make as much multiple use out of their efforts as possible! The infamous ASIFA Central Retreat Cake was no exception.

There was an ongoing chat throughout the Zoomerific afternoon, with various highlighted links hereby affixed for your viewing pleasure, and the final red button was pushed at 6pm, EST.

Chuck's Youtube Historic Animation Search Links:

Spicy City -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mx_0pB9-3Ww

D&D Insider Presents -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UqFPujRZWo

Heavy Metal *Neverwhere Land* sequence -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miar5eKG4uY
(to think they never used this sequence!)

Rock Odyssey -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrjEYb-XF6s

Tale of the Vienna Woods -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvkEmbDMeE4

Clairol Herbal Essence Shampoo commercial -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qwVovGjrOo

Jovan Sex Appeal commercial -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OALIUJ-yie0

Mad Magazine TV Special (1974) -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUQiXGA-0Tk

Or was it ***CST?***
Remember, *"Time is an illusion, lunchtime, doubly so."*[1]

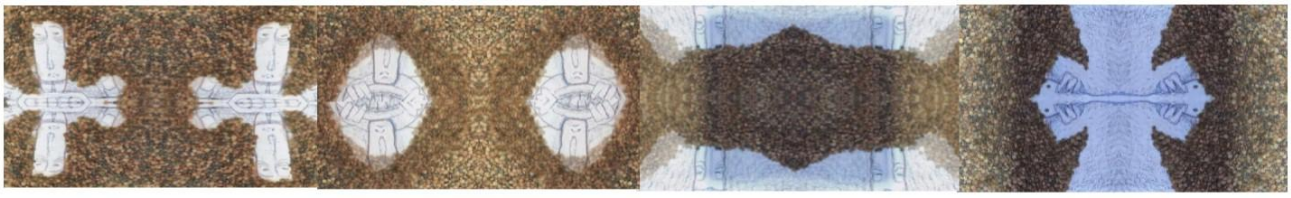
From *Love Affair With Marriage*

More Video Links:
The Interview with Signe on Vimeo -
https://vimeo.com/1004889769

The First Rough and Ongoing Edits of the Anijam, the fruits of the retreat, also on Vimeo -
https://vimeo.com/1008534123

(The Final IAD Poster Anijam, still in production, will premiere with this year's IAD celebration films.)

[1] Ford Prefect – or Douglas Adams, if you're in that sort of mood, you picky reader, you



Anijam Collage by Jane Flint

OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL - 2024

Short and Sweet - or was it Better Living Through Coffee Crisp?

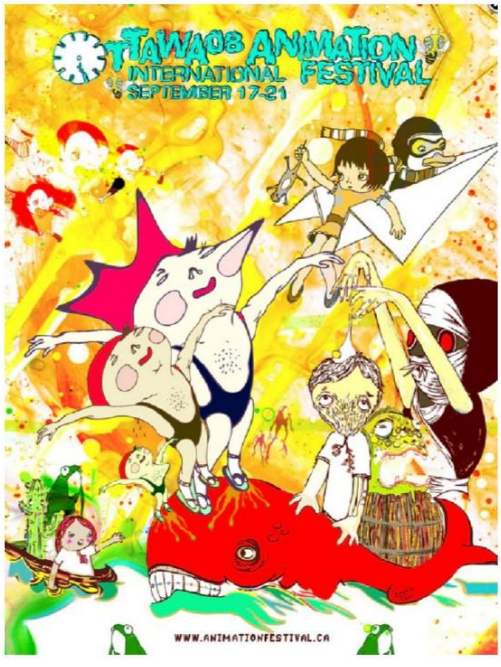
Yr Hmbl Typst Took Notes

While assembling my box of notes, business cards, pumpkin seeds, and bits of ephemera from this past September's adventure, I found some observations I made in 2008, for nobody in particular, after nearly a decade's absence to the autumnal celebration known as OIAF. I was obviously hankering for some overdue (but never overdone) poutine:

September, 2008: Once a year, I am physically moved to a foreign land of ambulating masses, where the most revolutionary of gothic jaywalkers performs her disobedience with civility, and where the creamy foam head of a Guinness pint is measured in centimeters.

Aside from my home base of Battle Creek[2], I have spent more time in Ottawa in the past than practically any other city on this planet. I find myself giving directions to places along Elgin Street, knowing the hours of the Rideau Centre, and even knowing that Centre is French for Center.

The draw has never been Parliament, although their sessions are lively and drip in delicious sarcasm, and while the museums are striking and the scenery evocative of lost forests in central Europe, what pulls me to the most civilized of North American capitols is the OIAF. Some of this is purely force of habit: before video and DVD, and even before KAFF[3], the OIAF is where you had to go to see international animation on a large screen, or absorb the latest 90-second test film from that upstart bunch at Pixar. Even once the novelty was diluted by the expanding availability of animation on video and cable, there remained the sense of community-- first of old-school animators, then of increasingly-earnest afficionados. And now of a new generation, able to create and share their work quickly and electronically, can converge and experience what the internet can only emulate–human contact.



[2] this was prior to relocating to the land where once trod the teenaged feet of Winsor McCay

[3] Another mythic incantation from the past, akin to *Camelot*

Chris Robinson has grown into his role as master of these ceremonies, from his hesitant and seemingly hostile beginnings to that of – dare one use the word congenial? – young fogey who delights in the occasional outrage while poking at the perimeter of propriety. He certainly seems to be using his time efficiently while on his ship of state – this visit served to premiere not one, but two books on animation (a biography of the late Ryan Larkin and a collection of interviews with Canadian animators).

To this setting, this sense of community, and its inherent enthusiasm, add a series of astonishing films and programs. This OIAF was a case of delicious sensory overloads. The feature films in competition included two created in Flash– Waltz with Bashir, a blend of documentary and Apocalypse Now surrealism by Ari Folman, and the astonishing Sita Sings the Blues, presented in multiple stylistic forms by Nina Paley, who bankrupted herself to create this five year labor of love.

The short films ranged from the stark Dark Years to the utterly giddy Lollypop to the bloodfest Super Jail. I made it to five sets of films, with only moderately overpriced popcorn and soda, and generally great weather for the walk between theaters. Even the picnic, with its ritualized pumpkin carving competition, left participants unscathed and provided winners with prizes that will likely show up on Ebay.

Morning meetings with the animators became increasingly bleary-eyed as the festival continued, catalyzed by late screenings and parties. "War stories" of producers and educators continued on panels ranging from animation software to curricula, culminating in an evening with Richard Williams moderated by John Canemaker, in itself worth the journey to Canada (I am so petitioning my school to get the DVD series by Williams, budgets be hanged![4]). And in a performance redefining old-school techniques, Daniel Barrow related his life in manually-moved overheads, creating a 19th century animated magic lantern show.

Concerns surrounding sliced budgets have made the OIAF subject to the generosity of strangers, but this year remained a celebration. Let's hope for more projected light from Canada in 2009.

Richard Williams - John Canemaker - OIAF 2008

Ottawa may have gotten a bit rougher around the edges in the years since I wrote those addled observations (blame the Guinness, blame the poutine), even encroaching on memories with its vigorous construction, displaced tragedies in human form, and the visible castings due to the global pandemic of drug addiction. But Canada's capital offers a more peaceful walk than many places I've nervously trod in Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, or Grand Rapids. I could likely become *vanished* in warmer climes, or among the uncivil illiterate with bipedal ambulation, but in Ottawa, I always feel that someone would help, or at least bother to track down my family, confirm my blood type, or identify the location of a lifetime of scars and scares.

To *that* delightful bit of retirement-driven gloom, I do a complete 180 segue to -

McGee's Inn - 185 Daly Avenue

This was an inadvertent discovery, a rather[5] upscale BnB just up the hill from the Bytowne Theatre. Also inadvertent was the booking of Room 13, "The Egyptian," likely a honeymoon getaway (and the only one available for four continuous evenings), although following a Stephen King numerology, and certainly appropriate for more gothic ceremonies. The breakfasts - superb, the decor of antiques – impeccable

[4] Today, the response is "DVD? Whuzzat?"

[5] Understatement of the century, any century

(OM triple G, is that typewriter an *Underwood?*), and the Divine Goddess of Edmore[6] demands a tribute of each specimen of wallpaper from that structure.

The Panel Discussions

Advice from Animators - "Alive to '25" with AI Concerns

Chris Rutledge, Jose Pou, Alison Mann (she rescues seals!!), Sam Gurry, Hana Schnogger gathered together to offer early-risers advice and some comfort in the face of AI. Some take-aways:

Remember to make your content creation important to you. Jose Pou is not fearful, he used to use *paper* (gasp!) - and still does!

Consider the industry as a moving ocean, with its ebb and flow within the business cycle

AI cannot create something from nothing, it can only recycle what is already there, but in the meantime, grind out all of those bad ideas and drawings. AI is a joyless entity.

Find your own niche - or just create a new niche.

Find the synergy of moving between commercial and personal projects (adapt one to the other, moving both forward, shoehorn one into the other).

Get random supplies from Michaels and do something with them for four to five hours - balance your brilliance with the bills, live life, and always set boundaries on your job.

Play with a cat, even if it's not your own.

Draw drunk octopii.

Don't procrastinate with perfection, *finish something*. Do a lot of quick little things daily that can build a creative momentum.

Talk to others. And listen in return.

With AI, remember that in the 19th century, photography was supposed to be

Communicating with Montreal Natives while in Canada

yr huml typst was finally able to try this

I used to amuse a dear, departed friend from the CBC, Claude LaPierre, with my abysmal high school French. I think I actually ordered a fried tractor while with him at a restaurant. They substituted sliced squid. The effect was the same.

However, he and I came up with this little apology for the folks in Montreal or Quebec, and I finally had the chance to use it on a couple visiting McGee's Inn during this visit to Ottawa. They spoke no English, and I recited this to them:

"Je peux parlez francais un peu. Un petit peu. Tres petit peu. En effet, il n'y a pas les lignes assez proches sur un règle qui peut montrer comme petit peux je peux parlais francais." They both laughed, and we spent the remaining early morning hours impersonating Marcel Marceau trying to figure out the mysteries of the Keurig machine in the main dining room.

"I speak a little French. A very little. Very, very little. In fact, there aren't two lines on a ruler close enough to show how little I speak French."

[6] That would be my dear wife Anne, without whom spring would never arrive on time, and the resulting potato famine would rival anything in the history of Erin.

the death of art - impressionism was the response

Don't wait for a studio for validation - people with the money make one dumb decision after another, which explains the general quality of Hallmark Holiday movie scripts

Decentralized production is possible (see the movie *Flow* for confirmation)

Use networking to enhance a personal project - "improve the diet of mainstream media"

Remember - the brilliant animator Mary Beams ran a pie shop between her films. So MAKE PIE.

And the toughest - Learn to say No. Do things you want on your own time and dollar - expect huge payment projects if they demand huge parts of your time. Don't be dragged down by little projects that take too much time for little artistic or compensatory satisfaction.

The Pixar *SELF* - *Creating a short film About Self-Sabotage*

Aubrey Mintz (ASIFA Hollywood's tallest member and most recent US citizen) and Searit Huluf hosted the discussion surrounding this incredibly detailed and exhaustively researched example of self-sabotage in order to "fit in." What do we lose in the process, what do we hide, and is it ultimately necessary to completely subdue our *raison d'etre* in a society? And, frankly, isn't it more fun to have societies with new stories? Take *that,* AI!

Aubrey Mintz (even tall when sitting) and Searit Huluf

It amazed me that, in 1986, we saw John Lasseter run *Luxo Jr* in this same building, convinced it was stop motion, and after we saw the computerized wire-frames and the rendering processes, were completely flabbergasted - we ran out of gasts, and our minds were broken. Here, we watched *Self* (also currently showing on *Disney+*), where an actual stop motion puppet was created and animated, to be integrated among computer-generated characters, and we thought the stop motion character was computer generated. Our minds were thus broken twice at Ottawa, and we all need another box of gasts. Make mine a double.

Searit Huluf's hair was the model for the *Self* character following a 3D print and scan of her coiffure. We also learned of a digital "back lot" at Pixar, so large that the backgrounds in *Self* were already from an existing library. Look closely, you'll see buildings from *Up* and *Soul*.

"We wanted her to carry the reminder of what she decided to abandon to fit in," we heard; therefore, her broken, elaborately carved and researched puppet face carried the cracks of her own self sabotage.

It was also noted that, while *Self* was the first Black character in a Pixar short, it was only as a puppet. Big budgets, baby steps.

Navigating Production Pipelines with Alison Mann and David Sharples

Alison found her background as a rescuer of seals was an "in" during her interview, and now she is in Creative Recruiting. She confessed that her early dream job was to have a food truck for vegan hot dogs called "Bite Me." Her subsequent maneuvering through the industry has helped her become the "Kevin Bacon" of Animation - with connections and digital Rolodex files to prove it. She likes to use the improv method of "yes, and..." ...and never lead your answer with "no." You're an artist - be creative. Both she and David Sharples had some talking points to share, to wit:

Alison Mann offers a recruitment program involving badges, without seals, as she saves those, while David Sharples shares his 20+ years of experience in discovering your motivating animus.

- Discover your creative voice. Get a vision board for yourself - pitch to yourself - consider what you do, what you say, your point of view, and your audience and direction. Write what you know - and learn what you need to know.
- Discover first who you are and what do you want - don't do a flood of applications - don't become an *actual* imposter amid applicants who fret about having "imposter syndrome." If you're stuck on an island, what will fill your bucket.
- Learn the basics of pre- and post-production, and understand that the actual production is most often overseas.
- Edit your portfolio to your job - if you don't, the recruiters will remember, and often (with Alison, anyway) three strikes and you're out.
- If you are given suggestions, use the advice. Edit your curation. The target is your job.
- Recruiting is active, by referral, or passive (the recruiter recruits, mainly to see who's likely interested).. "Evergreen positions" are those to see who could "fill the bucket" - and they may not necessarily be open. And when in doubt, go to the source of your ultimate destination without slogging through their online sites - According to this presentation, "75% of jobs available are not advertised."
- (It is interesting to note that at the Animation "Expose", the US production houses were conspicuously absent) (not Alison's or David's observation - just something we observed later that afternoon!)
- If you like a film, note the artists in the credits - reach out to them - build a network and someone will eventually bite and be worth your time. (Personal note - animators like to know that someone appreciates their work - and most often they'll be stunningly generous with suggestions and their time when they can be. Experience matters, and they can help you avoid a lot of pratfalls - leave that slapstick for your animation!)
- Interview with the *mirror technique* - even sitting in the same position as the interviewer can leave a subconscious impression ("gee, there's something about this kid that I like; I almost feel like I'm talking with myself!").
- Think of questions that are specific to the job you're applying for. Be interesting and interested in a Zoom meeting.
- "Next steps" – always ask this at the end of the interview, ie, "What happens next? Do I need to leave a blood sample? (Joke)"
- Remember you don't have to take an offered position, "there's always a crappy job that you'll like somewhere" in the meantime. (4.1% unemployment right now, but that's genre specific).
- ***Follow up with thanks, be short and memorable, provide contact information, and always presume good intentions.*** *Post-encounter snarks are remembered. And not in a good way.*

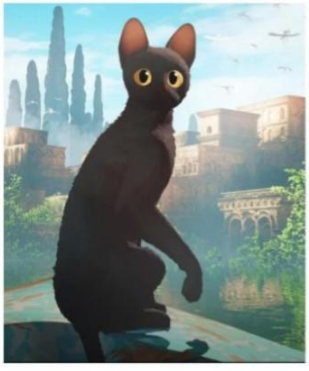
"Alive to 25" as an employment mantra? Well, with this guidance, it may be more like "2027." Although my pressing question throughout the presentation was wondering about the mid-century (aka "the 1950s) style graphics in the powerpoint made me wonder if they were just recruiting for a *Jetson's* reboot.

The reason we care - Leyla, Nicholas, and Rachel from Algonquin college are the future faces for the profession

The Picnic, *and of course*

THE PUMPKINS!

And Theatre Goers - Animation Absorbent Artists, All! I see Candy Kugel hiding there, somewhere – Peek-a-boo!



The Actual Films at OIAF

*Oh? There were movies, **too**?!*
A little sample of The Wares

Flow, the second feature from *Latvian wunderkind* Gints Zibalodis, took the deserved laurels for best feature this year. Its 84 minutes represents an "important fable on the power of camaraderie during times of cataclysmic ruin." There is no princess singing for a savior prince, no dancing mice, no talking donkey, yet every eye in the theatre was fixated on this constantly moving tale of an unexplained world without humans. Only the ruins of landscape ravaged by a mysterious, monstrous tide exist here, with animals, wild and domestic, intuitively linked for survival. And a capybara! It has a capybara!

Gianluigi Toccafondo's *La Voix des Sirenes* was awarded best short film. It is a dreamy assembly of poster-painted rotoscop-ish scenes featuring the consequences of responding to the come-hither song of mermaids that aren't part of Disney's fresh-water pools. *The jaws that bite! The teeth that catch!*

Stampfer Dreams was a "pre-cinema found footage" film by ASIFA International General Secretary Thomas Renoldner, making use of animated phenakistascopic imagery by scientist Simon Stampfer, ca 1833. It arrived at OIAF with a Magic Book of Optical Wonders version that can use the phone-app called *ARTIVIVE*. At last – some fun augmented reality that can make phenakistascopes spin! Oh to be augmented, now that autumn is approaching...
The trailer for the film version is at https://vurchel.com/v/31515/thomas-renoldner and the book is still listed at the Aniboutique at
https://www.aniboutique.ca/products/stampfer-dreams-by-thomas-renoldner - Just in time for the Holidaze!!!

You can flip, or you can snap-crackle-pop!

Discovery - Canadians Have a "Michigan Good-Bye," Too!

Y r hmbl typst was delighted to encounter James Murray (https://jamesmurray.tv) at the ASIFA International meeting. He was seeking to rejuvenate the ASIFA Canada chapter in the land of its nativity. He's an artist, an actor, and a creator of flip books made from the cardboard of cereal boxes, in a conservation process he called "upcycling." To

A perfect fit!

complete the effect, he packs the flip books *into discarded DVD cases*. Our conversation went from topic A to Zed and back again, twice, with three goodbyes, and finally a capitulation to our social upbringing with a quick dinner, and then -- another series of Midwesternesque good-byes! It happens in Canada too! If he can assemble nine other prospects, we may soon see an ASIFA Canada chapter in North America!

Our Interlochen Dinner with Bri Yarhouse - The Artists of Tomorrow, TODAY!

Interlochen, in Michigan's northern lower peninsula, offers students a complete high school experience in addition to its summer camp with the arts (https://explore.interlochen.org). ASIFA Central Treasurer and IAD maven Bri Yarhouse has added animation to their program, and this is the second year she has been able to bring some of her students along to experience OIAF. They are certainly a talented, enthusiastic, artistic and extremely animated collection of masterpieces in human form, interested in everything, curious about demystifying the chaos, and even tolerant of old animators waxing poetic about the aroma of 8mm Kodachrome fresh from the box. They are also quite fond of chicken strips, with ketchup, yet never seem to get any on their clothes. An amazing bunch of students! In attendance at this final night of OIAF were:

Gary Schwartz and Deanna Morse

Jose Pou, Brooke Keesling, Gary Schwartz

Corrie Francis Parks & Daniel Nuderscher

A Sketch by Cat

Cat discusses color theory and fluid dynamics

All very demure, very mindful, very cutesy - L-R - genius instructor, Gary peeking over Deanna, Jose, Brooke, not Cat, Cat, Oliver behind a good witch, not Cat, Bri, Corrie, not Cat - the advantage of being yr hmbl typst and editor is being able to maintain one's cloak of invisibility! Hee!

And for a final, if not most important, observation about the OIAF: for those tracking "steps" these days, it is quite easy to manage 5-7 miles per day perambulating about Ottawa. Well, perhaps *easy* isn't the right word, more like *inevitable*. For future visits, pack your acetaminophen (*paracetamol* if you're feeling cosmopolitan)!

Leah Ordonia with her bundle of woofie cuteness (https://www.leahighlights.com), yr hmbl typst (ok, not so invisible, but weighed down by a bag of books), and the insanely busy Tracy Miller-Robbins of Ohio (http://www.tracymillerrobbins.com)

Of course this only scratched the tip of the whole event - there were films to inspire, to perspire by, to eat popcorn to. And the "drink and draw" taught several lessons - namely, that the canned Gin Collins is a quick way to forget the name of the sandwich you had for dinner (a Reuben! And it was delicious!) and does nothing to help sketching from an upwardly-viewed perspective. But at least things were always looking up in Ottawa!

Future notes will appear as travel scribbles become deciphered, proof that writing in the dark has every drawback to it one can imagine (and that writing on one's jeans remains indecipherable, regardless which hand is used).

But Coffee Crisp is ALWAYS worth weaving through jammed truck lanes to snag a Duty Free discount!

Coffee Crisp - It's What's for Dinner!

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) October, 2024, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org
ANIMATION UNITES US
ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot! Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account:
https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/
ANIMATION UNITES US
And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - *https://asifa.net* *- be sure to check out the Facebook page n ANIZOOMATION*
ANIMATION UNITES US
As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at *jim.middletonrx@gmail.com* *or, for dull bloggery,* *https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com*
ANIMATION UNITES US
Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.

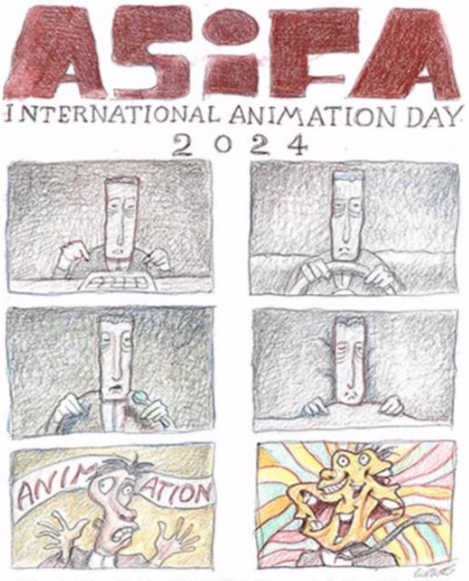
Newsletter for November 2024

Featuring the ASIFA Central IAD 2024

Three Main Courses *and* A Dessert

Long Program (entire listing, with intermission break)
89 minutes

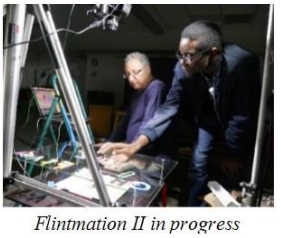
* denotes **Short Program** - 58 minutes



"Great job with the ANIJAM - Congratulations!" – Bill Plympton, this year's poster designer

** denotes **ASIFA Central Members/Students Reel** - 36 minutes
PLUS a **"Dessert Program"** - 6 more in 45 minutes

Nearly 600 submissions comprised the international participation in this year's IAD. Over two dozen were selected for the ASIFA Central International showreel, with multiple program lengths based on educator needs or venue availability. Some notes on the films for 2024 follow. The reels will be available until the end of November, 2024. Just keep track on the attendance for the showing(s). No showing is "too small!!"
For access to the reels, contact yr humbl typst at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com


Flintmation II in progress

1. ***Flintmation II*** - Gary Schwartz - ASIFA Central * ** "Desperately seeking a way to the other side of the cathode ray tube since 1961. A hunter/gatherer ethos of kinetic transmogrification with found, forgotten & rejected artifacts." Gary held a stop motion workshop in Flint, and so he deciphered not only the proper lip synch but *also* found out the actual words to a bit of the theme that has been indecipherable for 60 years - "courtesy of Fred's two feet"

2. ***Practice Makes Practice*** - Jeff Scher - ASIFA East - Says Mr. Scher, it is "a celebration of horsing around on paper." Jeff Scher is an Emmy-award winning animator with work in the permanent collection of numerous museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, The Harvard Film Archive, the Centre Pompidou, the Austrian National Film Archive, and has made commissioned work for *The New Yorker*, IFC, HBO, PBS, the Sundance Channel with a side hustle of music videos for Bob Dylan, Graham Nash, Joan Baez, Paul Simon and others. When not repurposing his volumes of sketches, he teaches animation at New York University, Tisch school of the Arts (bio from their website).

3. ***Little Fan*** - Sveta Yuferova - Germany * - Sveta was born in Saint Petersburg and finished her schooling there. After successfully graduating from the St. Petersburg University of Technology and Design she moved to Germany with her love for animation and storytelling. There she had the chance to study at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg and the Animation Mentor Online School.

The thought that objects could possess feelings has always fascinated Sveta. Her tale of a tiny fan playing with a feather became a reality with the ultimate question of *who* could be his best friend.

4. ***The Seed*** - Suresh Eriyat - India * - For the creators at India's Eeksaurus studio, a seed, or idea, may originate from you or be discovered by its clients. "Savour the joy of our creation, as we eagerly await your next brilliant idea to nurture and grow!" The stop motion clay animation, with digital augmentation, shows a process, but not necessarily their *only* process.

The Seed - E Studio

5. ***Scrappy Little Festival Bumper Film*** - CMU - Steve Leeper - ASIFA Central ** - Do you crave some zombie action in Bay City? Well, who doesn't? The Scrappy Little Festival gets a nudge from the class at CMU and also features variations on a square. Many squares.

6. ***Letters to Pakkimentie*** - Mika Koskinen - Finland - The story here is, "And the greatest of these is love." Director Koskine's grandparents' letters and diaries create a dialogue spanning decades. Time passes and, eventually, the image of a bed taken away becomes a symbol for time and love lost. Seeking a use of family artifacts Can bring life to the contents of dusty boxes. Mika Koskinen previously created *Espresso Doppio* (2015) and *Crack* (2017).

Deanna Morse embodies "animated"

7. ***Departure*** - Deanna Morse - ASIFA Central * ** ASIFA International president Deanna has added to her time-lapse contemplation of the passages of nature through an interplay of light and shadow across objects rendered obsolete or simply exhausted.

8. ***Skinny World*** - Huaxy Yang - ASIFA China * - a three minute, two-dimensional experimental animation of the stream of consciousness, or, one gummy short of an ambulance ride. Huaxy Yang describes *SKINNY* as 'death, decadence, and decline," and this plotless, short film uses a series of surrealistic shots to metaphorically depict urban social struggles.

Skinny World - sweet dreams!

9. ***Bird Infestation*** - Interlochen, Oliver Hale, Auteur and Animator, Bri Yarhouse, program director, ASIFA Central * ** Oliver Hale uses techniques learned at Interlochen to visualize a stream of consciousness poem, with a patter paced for wry humor and subconscious communication. And there are *birds!*

10. ***Retirement*** - Sara Hanif - Iran via ASIFA East * An exhausted employee, weary of career and job, counts down the days until retirement and a dream of becoming a fisherman. The anticipation is agonizing and challenging, trapping him in a suspended world of torment and hardship. Here, Sara endeavors to "breathe life into unique stories and fantastical creatures through the art of storytelling, and craft narratives that captivate audiences and leave a lasting impression." *Retirement* served as her final project to complete her MFA in Animation at Tehran University of Art. She continues her studies at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Retirement

11. ***Under the Water*** - Julia Orlik-Buratynska - Poland * - An imagined undersea mood piece, with tools available at Harbor Freight finding a new life and adventure with the miracle of stop-motion!

Under the Water - don't rust!

12. ***Musical Interlude - Commissioned work*** - Sparrow Middleton, Production (followed by a suggested *Intermission*, in long program Part A only) - in Edmore, Michigan, one does whatever Sparrow decrees. This year, she has expressed a fondness for the songbook of Nat King Cole and his 1940's Trio.

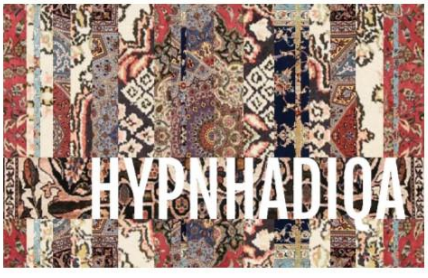
13. ***Where is the "I" in ASIFA?*** - ASIFA, Deanna Morse and Suzanne Zack, production and edit, with contributions from international membership ** We're a very active organization of right-brained individuals, and right-brained individuals aren't generally known for being all that organized! A Paradox! A Paradox! A most ingenious paradox! (*We've quips and quibbles heard in flocks, But none to beat this paradox!*)

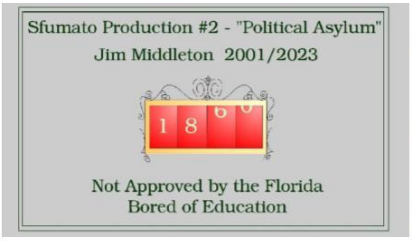
14. ***In Between*** - Long Qin - ASIFA China * The film was inspired by the letters of Mr. Zhong Shuhe and Mr. Zhou Zuoren (Chinese writer and essayist, and his publisher), using a torch in the darkness to reveal the ordinary people who once illuminated civilization. Everyone is extraordinary, each one an athlete, but many never step beneath the spotlight; they are also worthy of respect. Those who nurture future generations engender the courage to fight in the face of danger (from the director's statement). Stop motion propels the vision through the darkness and into a brighter, unknown future.

Fierce education

15. ***Place to Place*** - Natasha Cánepa - Puerto Rica - ASIFA South- In this 2D short, a text from a lonely traveler pushes a group of friends from faraway places to reunite in support. Brightly colored, briskly paced, Ms Cánepa squeezes every aspect of character animation technique into her study of the unity of friendship. A graduate of Savannah, she is now an independent artist with a one-woman studio creating storyboards, illustrations, and aspects of post-production. Her hand-painted works depicting the vibrant lifestyle of Puerto Rico are sold under the name of Forever Boricua.
"When you see this film, I hope you capture its message and become inspired to get through the day until you see your loved ones in person again."

16. ***Hypnhadiqa*** - Chris Sagovac - ASIFA Central * ** *Hypn: Sleep - Hadiqa: Garden - Hypnotic*: Tending to produce sleep. Paradisial dream gardens drift upon threshold consciousness.
"Hypnhadiqa is an experiment using imagery from hand woven rugs to represent hallucinogenic fantasmata encountered in the waning state of consciousness during the onset of sleep. The kaleidoscopic sequence, in this transitional state of reception, is intended to unlock the hypnagogic cognitive state of the viewer." - Chris Sagovac, associate professor of animation and chair in the School of Communications at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. It is also the first film *yr hmbl typst* could see with his eyes wide shut.





17. ***Political Asylum*** - Jim Middleton - ASIFA Central * ** The 230 year history of the US Capitol building told in 230 seconds. Loosely based on the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics, it gives Benny Bugg the opportunity to ride bone-shakers, *The General*, and the Enola Gay while taking the founding fathers out for a spin. Paced to match a 1921 recording of *Il Segretto di Suzanne* by Wolf-Ferrari and a 1908 unreleased vinyl test pressing of *The Liberty Bell March* (although not the familiar part). Filmmaker Jim Middleton is also typing these words, making the entire experience very, very meta.

18. ***A New World*** - The Indefatigable David Ehrlich - (83 years *young* - *with each new year a celebration*) ASIFA East *
"Becoming independent can be both invigorating and lonely, for individuals as well as for nations."
- David Gordon Ehrlich

Mr. Ehrlich received a BA in Government from Cornell, an MA in Dramatic Arts from the University of California, an MFA in Film from Columbia University, and studied sculpture and music in India under a Fulbright Fellowship. An independent animator living and working in the Vermont mountains for the last fifty years, his work has been shown at film festivals throughout the world. He was Professor of Film Studies at Dartmouth College (1992-2009) and Guest Professor of Animation at Communication University of China in Beijing.

Just how does he do this?

19. ***Ruptures of a Disability Difference*** - Carlos Rosas - ASIFA Central * **
Carlos Rosas animates a sweet vignette involving challenged children on a playground, their interactions marred by inattention, and shows that none of us are too young to appreciate a little empathy. Communication doesn't always have to be verbal to pull at one's *chordae tendineae*.

Communication in many forms

20. ***TAXI!*** - Pamela Restrepo - ASIFA East A 1980s Manhattan cab driver, host to an ever-changing cast of characters, reminisces about a time when he drove a director to a film set – and landed an acting gig.
Pamela Restrepo, the director, is a story artist from Atlanta, by way of Colombia. While studying at the Savannah College of Art and Design, she explord genres ranging from light comedy to dark horror. "This films comes from all the memories of hardworking people who make the foundation of our society. This film is a *thank you* to all of our loved ones, colleagues, and people to work together to make our days bearable." (From FilmFreeway artist statement)

21. ***The White Wings*** - Penelope Bekiari and *Vivi Markatos* - Greece-UK - ASIFA Central ** During the winter, a caterpillar finds a spot to hide and rest, despite the surrounding dangers. Spring soon comes and the unexpected changes of the season wakes the hero, with a new face and wings!
Penelope Bekiari, is a graduate of Theatrical Studies at the National University of Athens and a student of music of the Max Hallecker centre in Athens. Her interest is the music and multimedia within films and theatre.
Vivi Markatos is a children's book illustrator and a graduate of Computer Animation of the University of Portsmouth and the Department of Theatrical Studies of the National University of Athens. Her interest is to experiment in filmmaking with traditional and computer media. This is their debut film, with original music. The film is symbolic and has a lot of influences, but remains a universal story; the audience provides their own thoughts and interpretations. Remember: even a small creature like a caterpillar has its own story that is not only about a caterpillar.... (from directors' statements)

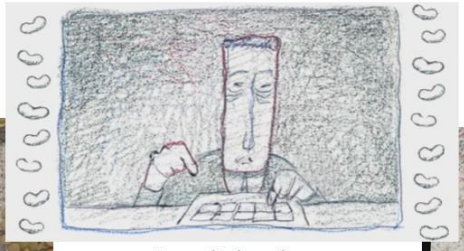
22. ***Grandmother*** - Julia Hazuka - Poland *

A poignant tale with a twist - we are all under the care of spiders! During the Edmore showing, this film elicited the most discussion afterwards - was the spider a metaphor? Is this a folk tale unique to Poland? Well, Julia Hazuka was inspired by the Spider Grandmother of the *Hopi and Navajo* folklore and it is a common theme among many Native American cultures, especially in the southwestern US. "Spider Rock," in Canyon de Celly, Arizon, is the legendary home to the Navajo Spider Grandmother! When she is in her spider shape, she lives underground in a hole that is like a Kiva. When she is called upon, she will help people in many ways, such as giving advice or providing medicinal cures. *Spider Grandmother* is seen as a leader, a wise individual who represents good things (from O!MPLA liner notes and Wikipedia).

23. ***The Irish Storyteller*** - Gary Schwartz * A brief lip synch surrounded by a ruin in Ireland wherein fairies can be your friend or nemesis. You want them to be your friend. A pre-pandemic flashback!

24. ***2024 ASIFA IAD Poster Anijam*** - ASIFA Central * ** (many segments created during the September 2024 retreat!)
Assembled from over a dozen animators within ASIFA Central and elsewhere, this anijam of short animations brings added life to the already dynamic and frisky 2024 IAD poster by Bill Plympton.
The giddy perpetrators comprise this issue's *Rotogravure*.

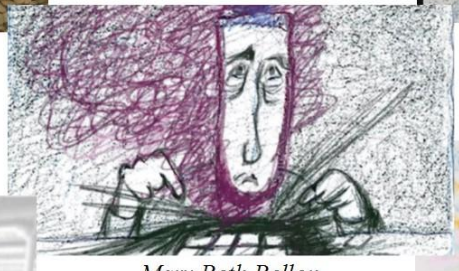
THE NOVEMBER ROTOGRAVURE - ASIFA IAD ANIJAMMERS



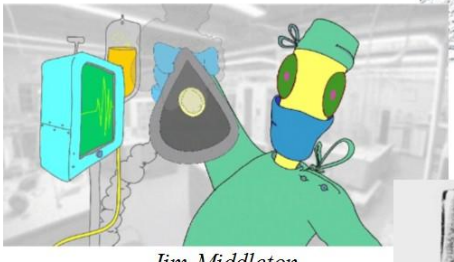
David Thrasher

Bob Swieringa

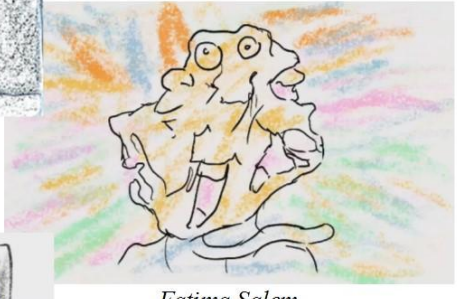
Gretchen Vinnedge



Mary Beth Bellon

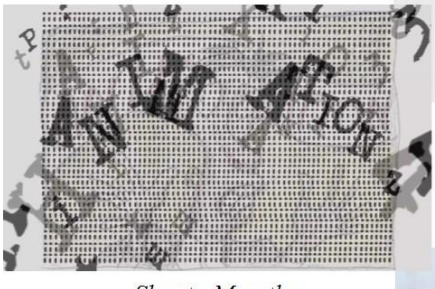


Jim Middleton

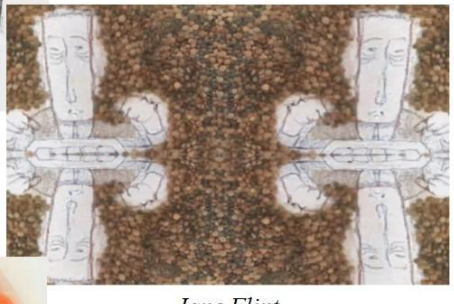


Fatima Salem

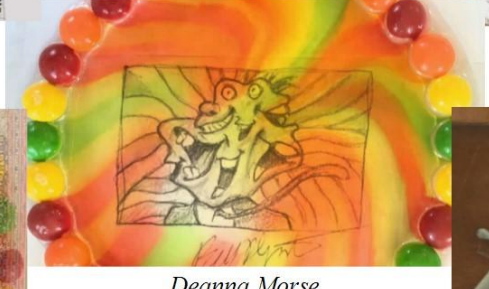
Guest Star - Pilar Newton-Katz



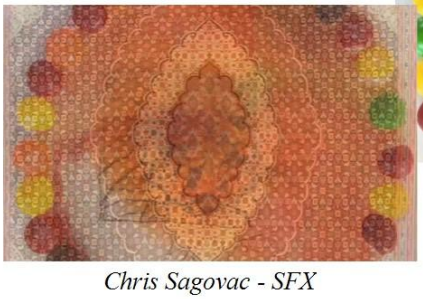
Shweta Marathe



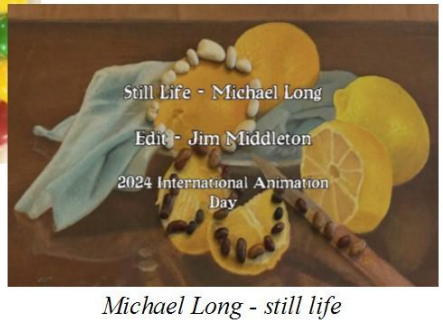
Jane Flint



Deanna Morse



Chris Sagovac - SFX

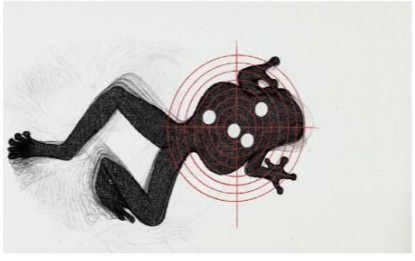


Michael Long - still life

BONUS DESSERT PROGRAM *- sweet, but with a little edge to it*

1. ***How are You?*** Deepak Singh - A storyteller from India, who has worked on projects for Netflix, Amazon, and the Canadian Museum of History. He is Assistant Professor in the Department of Animation at Chandigarh University.
How Are You? is an exploration of how we are trained to suppress our inner battles and project a facade of strength. He uses rotoscoping and a character's inner voice to build a literally heightened resolution.

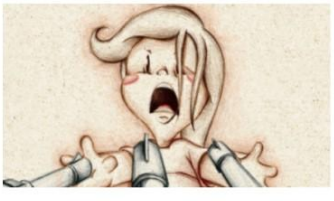
2. ***A Better Life*** - Jeff Scher - ASIFA East - "A brazenly optimistic song by Graham Nash about the future," as described by Mr. Scher. He also created *Practice Makes Practice,* part of the "long program" showing. Some additional information: in 2001 he received the Creative Capital Award in the discipline of Moving Image, and also won a Creative Arts Emmy for production design on the HBO documentary *The Number on Great-Grandpa's Arm*. Ultimately, Scher wants his viewers to create their own stories from the visuals he provides.



3. ***The Waiting*** - Voker Schlect - Germany - Karen Lips is a researcher and lived for several years in a tiny little shack in Costa Rica to observe frogs. After a brief departure, she returned to discover that the frogs were gone. All of them. The vividly, realistically animated documentary by Volker Schlecht sets out to find them – and uncovers a horrible truth.
Schlect is professor of drawing and design foundations at Hochschule Anhalt in Dessau. "I've also tried to show the process of a hand drawn animation by using the afterglow of the movement as a picture in its own right, paying tribute to »Pas de deux« by Norman McLaren." This film had a definite, sobering impact on the Edmore audience. *I Can't Happen Here?* Um...

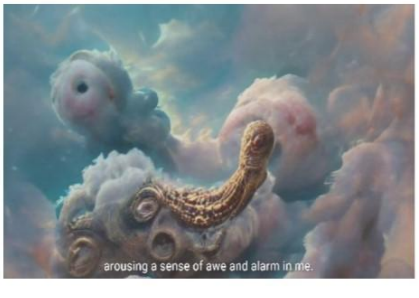
4. ***Love Me, Fear Me*** - Veronica Solomon - Germany - The film asks of women, "What would you be willing to do for them to love you? " Ms. Soloman's dance metaphor is about the roles women play and the shapes they take, about the stages they choose, and their audiences' demands for the right of acceptance. Romanian by birth and now a resident of Berlin, her sculpted animation process is self-taught in the process of earing her Fine Arts and Animation degrees from the Filmuniversity Babelsberg. The film elicited a few, "gollies!" from the mid-Michigan audience.

5. ***This Side-The Other Side*** - Lida Fazil - Iran



No boundary can prevent the formation of friends and affection between children. It takes the apolitical imagination of our youth to reconstruct what purported adults aggressively demolish with their righteous, reckless abandon. Her formal training was from Zahra and Tabiat Modares universities in Tehran, and she is currently a newspaper cartoonist, although given the current environment of repression, her film seems an allegory for her current surroundings. Lida is a name of Russian origin and translates to, "loved by the people."

6. ***Memories in the Clouds*** - Christina and Albert Laine - trying to tame AI
Memories in the Clouds visualizes Kristina (Žiėkutė) Laine's childhood memories in Soviet Lithuania. Thoughts blend with moods in an artist-directed, AI generated, painterly experimental film, narrated by Kristina whose fleeting memories become a child's dream figures in the clouds. The production intentionally presents how AI generated visual technology can be harnessed as a tool to produce a personal animated documentary film.
Kristina Laine , of Helsinki and Aalto University, creates animated films, theater and VR experiences. Albert Laine learned animation under the guidance of Priit Pärn, and his body of work ranges from advertising to lectures and independent production.



From the ASIFA East newsletter - as IAD evolves to its 2025 Edition, Lucija Mrzljak, of Estonia, will be designing the poster. Her recent film, *EEVA*, is a study in dysfunctional family dynamics following a funeral
https://www.facebook.com/adriatic.animation/videos/1681836325678592

Repeating a SPECIAL, INCREDIBLE OFFER FROM THE GANG AT ASIFA-SAN FRANCISCO

ASIFA-SF, among the many chapters of *Association Internationale du Film d'Animation*, had hopes for a rebound with live events once the CoVid threat had passed, but according to its newsletter editor, Karl Cohen, "that isn't happening yet." To emphasize the sincerity of their convictions, they have added this notice in their October newsletter, requesting me to share with our members:

TO KEEP OUR CHAPTER ALIVE, WE NEED TO FIND VOLUNTEERS TO DEVELOP LIVE AND/OR ONLINE PROGRAMS – UNTIL THAT HAPPENS WE ARE OFFERING FREE MEMBERSHIPS – NEW MEMBERS WANTED, SIGN UP AND RECEIVE FREE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER AND TO WHATEVER AREA SCREENINGS ASIFA-SF MEMBERS GET INVITED TO.

Contact karlcohen@earthlink.net and get your name on his monthly digital tome - often running over 20 pages (yr hmbl typst is honored to be among his proofreaders). Karl has connections *and stories.* He is author of *Forbidden Animation,* a frequent contributor to *Animation* magazine, the recipient of the ASIFA International Prize in 2008, and is nearing completion of a sweeping history of the societal impact of animation.

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) November, 2024, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

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ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Make sure to check our Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

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And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - and be sure to check out the Facebook page - ANIZOOMATION - https://www.facebook.com/groups/342482260109209/

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As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or zoetrope camera settings that actually work, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for his dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

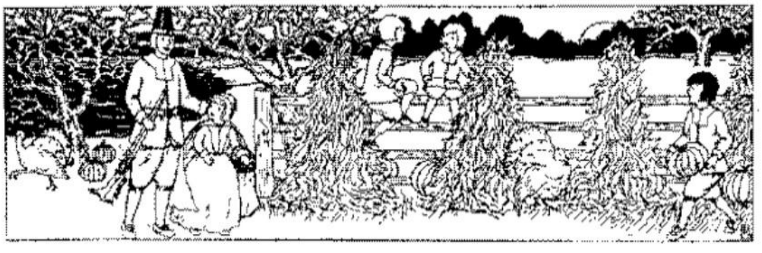
ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos. Make that threes. And just how does David Ehrlich do that?

Our Dazzling President *Julie Goldstein* A Pristine Vice President *Christopher Sagovac*
Treasurer and Spectacular International IAD Coordinator *Bri Yarhouse*
Dashing Social Media Coordinators and Chapter Ambassadors: *Tracy Miller-Robbins and Josh Harrell*
Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Frequently Bothersome Membership Coordinator - *Jim Middleton*
With Frisky, Free-Range Board Members *Deanna Morse! (Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)* and *Gretchen Vinnedge! Stephen Leeper! Michael Long! Bob Swieringa!* *And the ever-dapper* *Charles Wilson!*

This page has a footer (see below) but no header. How this is possible is likely an exercise in quantum journalism and typesetting.

In either case, you don't have time to worry about it now. Just marvel at the seven pages you have already experienced, consider this to be scrap paper, or - hey! - we could just clutter it up with random images of November, courtesy of Dover publications and its clip art collection. After all, a page is a terrible thing to waste...



ASIFA Central

First 2025 Newsletter for ASIFA Central

Yule Tied 2024-2025

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Occasionally Bothersome Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

ASIFA INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATES ITS 65TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2025

"IT IS IN THE MINDS OF MEN AND WOMEN THAT PEACE MUST BE BUILT" Declared Founders at UNESCO in 1960: *What a Good Time for a Reminder*

From the New Year Greeting for 2025 by ASIFA International IAD coordinator, Bri Yarhouse:

"Today, there are over 28 armed conflicts that are occurring across the globe. How do we as an organization respond? When the Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (ASIFA) was chartered in 1960 it was partly in response to a world at war. Provisioned under UNESCO, Peace has been one of the tenets of interchange between animators and our differing cultures.
"Inspired by Russian Animators who spoke out against war with Ukraine, we want to promote Peace everywhere. No matter what you believe or how you disagree with one another, violence and killing is not the answer. All creatures have the right to live in peace."

"Animators from around the world of all ages will be invited to contribute 8-11 second short films on the subject of peace. Short films will be shown through a variety of venues including streaming. A curated collection will be offered for IAD 2025.

"Deadline for short films will be September 1, 2025. This allows time for workshops this summer."

Technical Details on page TWO!

Technical Details for ASIFA International Peace Short Film Project

Pixel dimensions should be either 1920 x 1080 (HD) or 3840 x 2160 (4K UHD)
H.264 compression.
Credits should not be embedded in the short film but provided separately.
Animators have the option of being anonymous to reflect the potential personal danger of being targeted.
Each short should end with the word "Peace" in the personal language of the animator.
Animations must include their own sound and be royalty free and able to be shown without restrictions.
Animators must agree to the Creative Commons licensing: CC BY NC ND 4.0.
Content is subject to the animators choice but must be a response to our theme of peace in the world, however they interpret this.
ASIFA is not responsible for the content.

Films will be integrated with the 2025 IAD festivities.
Bri Yarhouse at Interlochen is already inspiring her students with animated contributions.
The 65th anniversary poster will share a celebration of peace along with ASIFA International!
More details in the weeks ahead! Stay tooned!

ASIFA CENTRAL CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2025 AS WELL!

And yes, even ASIFA Central is entering *its* golden years - 2025 marks fifty years since the birth of the ASIFA Central chapter in Chicago, amid fanfare, nonprofit paperwork, showings of actual FILM WITH SPROCKETS, and creation of *Frame By Frame,* the first official animation communication from *The Windy City* to *the entire WORLD.*
In 1975, land masses shifted, buildings quaked, Acme paper crinkled, Oxberrys flew everywhere, artists surfed the Chicago river, and the accounts of self-trained animators *shooting on twos* shocked the midwest.
This year will be marked by celebrations, retreats, showings, IAD, and a commemorative book with occasionally accurate tales of mystery and magnetic pole bending. If the sun seems to rise in the West and stay there, looking lost, you'll know the party is still going on.
need to notify the authorities, unless of course, they have really, *really* good recipes for zucchini bread. And oh, how animators can *zucchini!*

AND A STILL SPECIAL, INCREDIBLE OFFER FROM THE GANG AT ASIFA SF:

Karl Cohen says HI!

ASIFA-SF, among the many chapters of *Association Internationale du Film d'Animation*, had hopes for a rebound with live events once the CoVid threat had passed, but according to its newsletter editor, Karl Cohen, "that isn't happening yet." To emphasize the sincerity of their convictions, they have added this notice in their October newsletter, requesting me to share with our members:

TO KEEP OUR CHAPTER ALIVE, WE NEED TO FIND VOLUNTEERS TO DEVELOP LIVE AND/OR ONLINE PROGRAMS – UNTIL THAT HAPPENS WE ARE OFFERING FREE MEMBERSHIPS – NEW MEMBERS WANTED, SIGN UP AND RECEIVE FREE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER AND TO WHATEVER AREA SCREENINGS ASIFA-SF MEMBERS GET INVITED TO.

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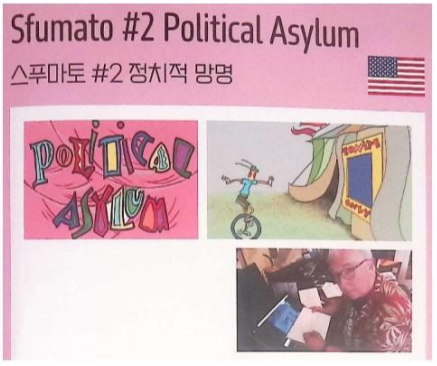
A Note from ASIFA Korea Chapter President, Nelson Shin

Thanks to contributors whose wonderful films for IAD 2024, helped us successfully wrap up the event by ASIFA Korea on November 1 and 2, 2024.
We had 54 films from 11 countries – Bulgaria, China, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, Sri Lanka, Poland and USA (Central, East & South), divided them into four public screenings, free of charge, at the Nelson SHIN Animation-Art Museum.
More than 120 people – including professors, students, animation professionals – joined the general audience.
We produced and shared a catalogue of the showings with the audience and interested filmmakers.

Gary Schwartz



Jim Middleton

Chris Sagovac

And Time for the Seasonal Update from ASIFA International's President, Deanna Morse - An Active 2024

ACTIVITIES

From all accounts, we had a robust International Animation Day, with varied initiatives and programs around the world.
We arranged in-person ASIFA gatherings at partner festivals – Stuttgart, Zagreb, Annecy, Ottawa, Cinanima, and others. At festivals, we distributed more ASIFA Postcards, and are planning another postcard gallery in 2025. A call for art will come at the start of the year. At Stuttgart, we presented the ASIFA Prize to Michaela Pavlatova. Thanks to Agnes Li and Annegret Richter for coordinating.
At Cinanima, ASIFA was represented with a program of Animations for Freedom., curated by Thomas Renoldner and a program from the Xiamen Animation Festival, presented by Johnchill Li.
We have a new proposed ASIFA Chapter - ASIFA Mongolia. Welcome!
And, in this past year, we have several new ASIFA Board members. Also, welcome!

Michaela Pavlatova

INFORMATIONAL VIDEO
For festivals and IAD, we created a snappy ASIFA overview video to introduce our activities. It is 6 1/2 minutes - feel free to use it!
It is on asifa.net, www.deannamorse.com/community , or here - www.vimeo.com/954009443

2025 PLANS
The Executive Board and Anniversary Committees are both meeting soon. The EB is discussing our upcoming General Assembly in 2025, financial reports, chapter communication, new chapters, and more. The 65th (anniversary) planning

group has been meeting monthly, and has chosen our Anniversary Logo.

The committee will present concrete ideas to you soon. But, here are some of the things we have been discussing – We are planning to print some postcards, and also upload the 65th logo design for chapters to create their own. We want to encourage students to create an animated logo from the chosen design, with a themed challenge for IAD and AWG, potentially: "living in a peaceful world." Establishing designated awards at festivals, an expanded ASIFA Student award, curated retrospective programs to offer to festivals and chapters, a special edition of ASIFA Academic Magazine celebrating the 65th Anniversary, and some discussion of how to recognize important ASIFA members, both old and new.

If you have input on these ideas, please let us know.

THANK YOU…..
I am thankful for you, for this global community of animation artists who believe that there is power in connecting with each other, across borders, to share our love of the art of animation, building bridges across cultures, to seek mutual understanding, working for peace and tolerance.

I am thankful that ASIFA will celebrate our long heritage next year recognizing that we are 65 years young, honoring our past, and moving forward with new ideas and initiatives.

In peace,
Deanna Morse
President, ASIFA

The ASIFA Central COFFEE BREAKS

and Incredible Links Therein from November 2024 through January 2025

Amid the monthly coffee break sessions, generously hosted by ***Michael Long*** of Webster University, there are always lively discussions on animation topics and the challenges facing everyone in the 21st century. The Zoom *chat* is always a robust depository of suggested links and commentary, and we have even figured out how to copy and preserve that material to share with our extended membership and enthusiastic readers. Mr. Long offered this observation on animation, to wit: It is "the light of micropleasures in drawing movements."

David Thrasher continues to celebrate the very event itself with the ongoing evolution of his bumper film, *Let's Go To the Coffee!*

https://youtu.be/gkw_iWww8_Y?si=kTRPqtBQJTlG_Zep
In working with his 3D project, he also uncovered The Horrors of Early CGI
https://youtu.be/XyGfxCxnZW0?si=JVRaVuJGUtVVY7O1
...and someone's postulated cause of the sinking of the Titanic
https://youtu.be/gFNoYlAVtTI?si=48q9Oxzo6hi74PE1

And helpful tutorials for the ever-changing world of Blender (not the *Futurama* character):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogs7OTQBjwU - make a frog!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lXg5ucthFYE
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaOEsAOnq7s

ASIFA Central's Anijam for IAD - https://vimeo.com/1019263673 - much of it created during the retreat of September 7th in 2024

Collage in Motion - J Akre

We welcomed ***John Akre*** - https://johnakre.com/ - in November, with his incredible collection of online material, 16mm hand-drawn shorts, stop-motion, flower-kistascopes, projects with Legos, masking tape, post-it notes, now in Louisville, KY from the land of his nativity in Minneapolis. This led to discussions of the dazzling work of Marie Paccou, cave art, oil lamp illusions, and J. Stuart Blackton. So, of course, we had links!

Easily discovered was the prolific ***Marie Paccou*** and her Animated Zoetrope Umbrella, ever prepared for *quand it pleut*: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=262303909045732 - and her home site continues to amaze with her repurposed paperbacks-into-flipbooks - https://mariepaccou.com/index.php?mode=qui

And then came the recollection of the early days of short films between HBO feature showings, some sneaking in before they made it to the festival circuits in some mysterious, pre-streaming, process:
The Big Snit - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKmAPh46JXk ("Wal, blow my lips off!")
The Cat Came Back - 1988 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck0jwS0CvKk

In December, we fell upon this quote from Siz Wang, in the December 2024 edition of the aNYmator ASIFA-East newsletter: "I think the human experience is important because thinking is a social activity. You cannot think alone, so you need to meet people, and New York City is a great place to do that."

It prompted a discussion of the importance of interactions among members of any discipline, then the shocking revelation that ***Bob Swieringa*** was probably "going to be late" because *he had been hit by a car*. (Note: he was encouraged to wait until ambulation, not ambulances, were the prominent factor in his life).

Deanna Morse, back from a dizzying tour of the Northern Hemisphere, reported on her amazing visit to Portugal's Cinanima-24, with her presentation being preserved on youtube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Buyqevihe3U

With Joanna Quinn and Les Mills

Deanna also related that there were over 550 films for the Academy™ consideration in the animation category, over half of them features. All were excited on the prospects of theatrical release for the Latvian film *Flow* by Gints Zilbalodis (Deanna later told the coffee that she had seen it at least six times), and were in unanimous accord that Adam Elliott's *Memoir of a Snail* was an amazing experience, but definitely *not* for children!

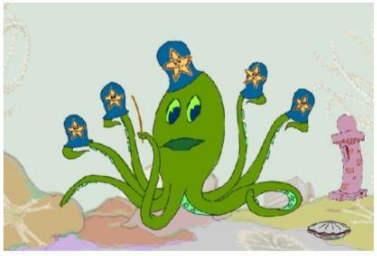
With Kim White

Wallace and Gromit's *Vengeance Most Fowl* from Aardman was also on everyone's short list once it made the streaming services later in December (later note: it is a lot of fun, and the set constructions are amazing!).

Benoit Berth Siward also curates an incredible animation resource - *The Animation Showcase* - that offers a vast series of streaming animation shorts, often running in tandem with international festivals or having Academy™ nominations. It offers a great opportunity for access, especially for those not able to make it to festivals. It does require registration, but once you're in, you get emailed updates on the latest and greatest in their current playlist - https://watch.animationshowcase.com/

Gary Schwartz wanted us to all be aware that there is a seemingly systemic collapse of art schools across the US, amid all the concerns about jobs and AI, and that even Sheridan College is cutting back on some of its programs. He includes his alma mater, the Philadelphia College of the Arts (PCA) to the list. Evidently, ten schools closed during 2024. Here's the link to the full story: https://observer.com/2023/09/independent-art-colleges-closing/

Jim Middleton finished *another* project from his misspent youth - well, his 50s, anyway, still often misspent - it was initially a weekend romp involving a lip sync'ed octopus as a policeman, to a portion of the Gilbert and Sullivan song, *When a Felon's Not Engaged in His Employment.* In 2007, he drew the first 20 seconds, then got distracted by stuff. And things. It should have been lost forever, but a *.fla file popped up on an external hard drive, in mid-back up. So the beast was finally wrapped up in all its 720x480 glory, becoming a true 60 second trifle. Now on vimeo...
https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/1046164199
Also, *Au Revoir, Jerome* , directed by Chloe Farr, caught Jim's eye for its surreal atmosphere and dazzling palette - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKJWZzNeyH8



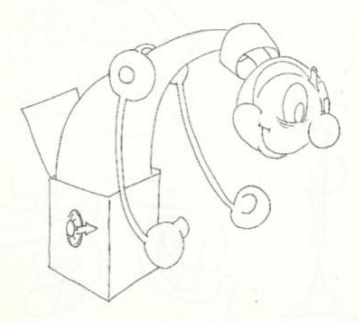
A 60-Second Trifle (2007-2025)

Hey, Zoomers!
Michael, Jim, Gretchen, Gary, Deanna, David

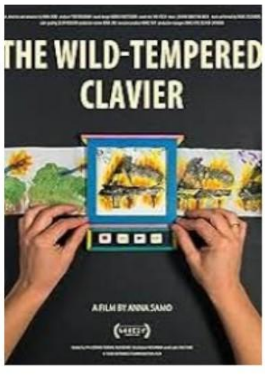
And in keeping with the maxim, "Review your notes as soon as the meeting is over," *yr hmbl typst* came upon this mysterious quote, scribbled in the margins of the December coffee journal entry: "Somebody took my antiperspirant and now I just smell like perspirant." The beleaguered village of Edmore has yet to offer any source for this bit of wisdom.

A favorite cartoon of the ASIFA Zoomers is the 1928 Fleischer brothers' classic, *Koko's Earth Control.* It entered into the National Film Registry in 2024, and the prints that are available are so clear you can see the "cut and tear" technique in all its delicious splendor!

Au Revoir, Jerome by Chloe Farr



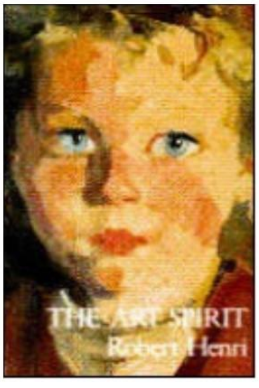
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLuyN1SOyYQ&t=2s
Animation Magazine has the full story at their link:
https://www.animationmagazine.net/2024/12/fleischer-toon-kokos-earth-control-added-to-national-film-registry



And while on the subject of classic animation techniques, the December coffee brought up a new modern classic, *The **Wild** Tempered Clavier,* where Anna Samo created animation on a continuous roll of toilet paper! Our pandemic-lockdown era workshop made use of a similar technique with our quick access to well-stocked closets fille with Angel Soft and Cottonelle fluffed goodness!

Oh those bittersweet memories...

In our January ASIFA coffee, we discovered the full tale of Bob Swieringa's close encounter with moving metal, his vast capacity for survival on the wild walkways of Kent county, his patience with being a patient, and his upcoming storyboard, soon to be a major motion picture, for *How to Get Hit by a Car*. He had to watch a youtube video for proper instruction on crutches. Seek ChatGPT for better words than "fortitude" to describe his recovery.
The situation prompted some dialog among the generations in attendance, as the responsible driver was considered elderly:
– "In your country, are you *allowed* to drive a car when you're 70?"
– "Um, yes. And we prefer *sixty-ten* to 70."
– "In Missouri, when you turn 70, you need to get your license renewed every 3 years instead of 6. This includes a vision test and asking you if you can identify different kinds of street signs. Otherwise, you can drive till you drop—probably not the safest practice."
– "If you drop while driving in Michigan after 70, you lose your casino privileges."
Kidding aside, Bob is healing well, and everyone at ASIFA Central is relieved, knowing his recovery is aided by his extraordinarily positive outlook and great sense of humor. We all want to be Bob when we grow up.



When film discussions resumed, it was to note that, for the first time in anyone's memory, the layout designers were given opening "cinematography" credit for the recently released CGI animated feature *Wild Robot.*

Also, artistic statements and educational guidance emerged from a classic source - *The Art Spirit* by Robert Henri. It still rings true after 102 years. And it is still in print!

More technical discussions followed, examining the various makeshift downshooters being used in a world of fewer mechanics and more prestidigitalization. ***Chris Sullivan*** and ***Gary Schwartz*** weighed in on Manfrotto tripods, as Deanna had just obtained hers.

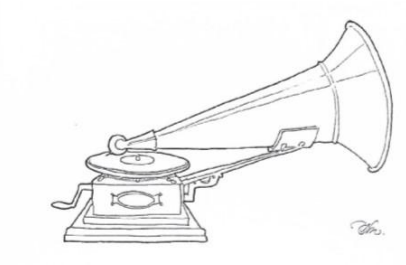
The challenge of outdated technologies created a discussion on earlier versions of Flash from Adobe and the value of SWF files in the 21st century - apparently, AfterEffects can still read them (Quicktime used to be a handy alternative, even reading early FLC from the DOS era – shortly after the development of Cuneiform, an early analog system).

Steve Leeper has links to his *Creation* film, an inspirational work-in-progress: https://jsl-studio-animation.webnode.page/
We also learned that Russian animators are still expressing themselves, albeit with extreme anonymity:
https://www.cartoonbrew.com/politics/russian-animators-creating-anti-war-shorts-protest-putins-attack-213975-213975.html

And in the category of peace if no war, or war if no peace, ***Michael Long*** offered this link to McLaren's *Neighbors,* in case it had been unseen by anyone under the age of sixty-ten - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1q8f-I6YsI

David Thrasher uncovered the trailer for *Hundreds of Beavers* https://youtu.be/5h4P-26kHAw?si=wZYFsxB-xHJu5NbA – a supernatural comedy where "a drunken applejack salesman must go from zero to hero and become North America's greatest fur trapper when he loses his whole operation in a fire and is stranded in the wilderness." Facing starvation, he must survive in a surreal winter populated by *Hundreds of Beavers* played by actors in full-sized beaver costumes. In black and white, with sight gags and stop-motion worthy of Mack Sennett.

Public Domain Update - SOMETHING Positive About 2025!



"Sorry, Nipper, we're going Orthophonic!"

For 2025, the magic years of access to the world of public domain are 1925 and 1929. Any recording made at the dawn of electrical phonography (ie 78rpm) in 1925 or earlier, or any film or published work up through 1929 are now in the public domain.

So what, you ask? Well, *Skeleton Dance* is yours, as is *The Cocoanuts* with the Marx Brothers, the first filmed version of *Singin' in the Rain*, and thousands of other works. 1925 hits *a lot* of early jazz, and on microphone, not acoustic horns (so bass is bass and not a tuba), and studios were in a rush to re-issue new versions (now 100 years old, but new then!) of classical pieces that would set Carl Stalling to drool. Lots of material to study and learn from, lots of sounds for test tracks and inspiration. See https://web.law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2025/ for more examples, and also check out a new site called Creazilla - https://creazilla.com/ - for thousands of graphics and music clips (and complete works). All, of course, in addition to the indefatigable gang at https://archive.org , yr hmbl typst's favorite afternoon time suck (that's a technical term, of course).

A Note from Cindy Keefer, of the CVM

"Just a quick note to let all of you know CVM is fine. LA is devastated by wildfires, but our office and vaults are not near the fires or evacuation zones. I am holed up several hours north in wine country, working on my next Fischinger book. We extend our sincere condolences to one board member who was evacuated.

"While we have many colleagues and friends who have evacuated, we've not heard of any CVM members who've lost homes. Our thoughts are with all who are still in LA.

"Many thanks to those who've reached out to check on us. In the near future, we'll be moving some materials OUT of Los Angeles."

Nancy Denney-Phelps Hits The Trail! http://awn.com/blogs/sprockets

info from - https://www.awn.com/news/animation-journalist-nancy-denney-phelps-releases-animation-trail

Animation historian and longtime blogger Nancy Denney-Phelps has released her new book, *On the Animation Trail, 20 Years of Animation Festival History*, featuring front and back covers by Joanna Quinn. The new book charts the recent history of animation festivals from the oldest animation festival in the world in Annecy, to the founding of the festival in Peja, Kosovo. During her extensive travels, Nancy has recorded not just the films screened, but also the people and what makes each festival unique. It is shipping now, or at least very soon, and can be ordered directly from Routledge Press, IBAN number ISBN 9781032565682. Nancy has been a thorough source of information for the ASIFA-SF chapter, giving editor Karl Cohen a lot of detailed, behind-the-scenes observations of her exhaustive international journeys. In our discussions, she recommends reading "with a good dark chocolate and delicious Cabernet." Cheers!

This late-breaking (15 January, 2025 morning) news from LA via Cindy at CVM.

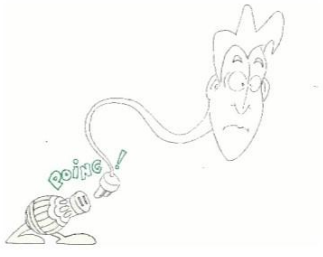
"We're sad to share the terrible news that Charles Dockum's Dockum Research Lab in Altadena, CA has burned down in the horrendous LA fires.

The building contained his archive relating to his Mobilcolor work, and his last Mobilcolor Projector. There are some papers and diagrams at the Guggenheim NY's archive, and some papers, photographs and all of his Mobilcolor films at CVM.

His daughter Greta who lived on the same street lost her house. She is OK.

We'll soon post this news to various social media sites. So very tragic."

To see what was lost, view the page about Charles Dockum on the CVM website:
http://www.centerforvisualmusic.org/Dockum



ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) January 2025, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

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ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Make sure to check our Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

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And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - and be sure to check out the Facebook page - ANIZOOMATION - https://www.facebook.com/groups/342482260109209/

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As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or zoetrope camera settings that actually work, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for his dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos. Make that threes.

Psst! Free-Range Board Member *Deanna Morse (Madame President to All ASIFAnians!) has a new web-site: deannamorse.com*

Analytical and Articulatory Animation Analyses

Supplement to ASIFA Central Newsletter Series - January 2025

The supplement in this issue features Part Three of Karl Cohen's essay on animated films and the holocaust, along with generous segments from our free-range member Chuck Wilson
There will not be a quiz.

Part Three of Karl Cohen's Essay on Animation and the Holocaust

Holocaust films represent a major evolution of animation as a serious medium for communication and persuasion. Animated, documentary-style productions can further explore other difficult issues confronting the world today, from societal relationships to living on a planet struggling to sustain an inhabitable environment.

While most animation dealing with horrific mass murder refer to Nazi atrocities, there are now at least three powerful animated works that deal with more recent barbaric events.

Ulf Pikkov's *Body Memory* (Estonia, 2011, 9 minutes), is a remarkable, powerful film that isn't about the Germans shipping humans in cattle cars to the slaughter houses. Stalin used the same method to ship his "enemies" in Estonia to work camps (gulags) in Siberia and ~~to~~ other locations. Pikkov's powerful work captures the horrific drama of beingin a cattle car headed towards one such gulag. Without using human voices on the soundtrack, Pikkov conveys what the people might have been thinking, with the tensions and mental dramas building until it explodes. (the smell must have been awful as well.)
https://www.meetyoolee.com/post/body-memory-2011

When I thanked Nancy Denney-Phelps for introducing this film to me, she said, "If I remember correctly, Ulo told me that he filmed the brief segments of twisted forests on the actual train route that was used to take people from Estonian to the gulags in Siberia. Ulo has a PhD, and this year he and his family are living in the U.S. while he is teaching at the Rhode Island School of Art and Design."

Voices from Kaw Thoo Lei by Martha Gorzycki (2015, 11 minutes) is an important, underreported story. Martha's short is an impressive experimental documentary, weaving fragments of interviews together that she recorded with members of the Karen people of former Burma (now Myanmar). It is a powerful and disturbing film that hints at what they have experienced, including ordeals they witnessed, and events that were inflicted on them, before they fled their country.

The film is an experience where the animated visuals create a somber mood rather than depicts actions described in the soundtrack. It becomes a meditation where you have the opportunity to concentrate on the message. It has won awards at over 20 film festivals for its excellence.
https://vimeo.com/marthagorzycki

I asked Martha Gorzycki, ~~h~~ead of the animation program at San Francisco State University, why she decided to make this remarkable film about the plight of the Karen people. She is not of Asian descent, nor has she ever been to Myanmaryet she spent several years developing this work of art.

She said she first heard about the Karen people several years ago from an animator whose wife is Karen. Despite the horrific story of their plight, she was told that nobody was listening to their tragic story or their pleas for help. Months later she met other Karen refuges in Minnesota (where a relative was helping them to adjust to living in America). She heard similar sentiments repeated – that nobody is listening to them or was willing to provide the much-needed humanitarian assistance.

The Karen migrated to Burma over two thousand years ago, but other groups who arrived earlier had different religious and cultural beliefs. Each claimed parts of the country as their land, so the conflict between groups has lasted for centuries.

Their present troubles arose when Burma became an independent nation in 1948. The new government wanted to unify the nation. That resulted in a civil war with the government's military slaughtering civilians, an ethnic cleansing that has been going on and off since 1948.

Martha responded by recording interviews about the brutal experiences they were subjected to by Myanmar government soldiers. The hatred is based on generations of ugly prejudices, a hatred among different ethnic-based groups, and a complex mixture of religious, political and social beliefs.

The Karen people Martha interviewed had once lived in the original eastern Burma, near the border of Thailand. They are a different cultural group than the better known Rohingya, who lived to the west. Most of the Rohingya fled in the second decade of this century to fields in Bangladesh

when the army burnt down their villages.

Unfortunately, the fields where they settled ~~in~~ flood each monsoon season, destroying property and drowning the inhabitants. Both the Karen and Rohingya have experienced the horror ~~of~~ terrorist experiences that have led to the genocide of both groups. The perpetrator was and still is the Myanmar military government.

Martha's final step was to edit together the soundtrack and to illustrate it without using images that would distract from the spoken words. The end result is an impressive cry for help that calls attention to the~~ir~~ tragic humanitarian crisis that remains unresolved. The visuals are abstract compositions of materials she collected and filmed on a traditional animation stand. They help ~~us imagine~~ portray the dangerous, dark forests and jungles where these concealed people try to survive.

Waltz with Bashir, Ari Folman (2008, Israel, 90 minutes), involves a former Israeli soldier trying to recall ~~his~~ the repressed memories of his experiences during the 1982 war with Lebanon, while trying to understand his part in the Sabra and Shatila massacre. The purge ~~that~~ took place in refugee camps, and the soldier's unit sent flares into the night sky to help the Israeli-allied Lebanese Christian Phalange militia carry out their horrible mission. The resulting massacre of between 762 and 3,500 civilians (the number is disputed) was an act of retaliation for the assassination of Bachir Gemayel, a popular general who had just been elected president of Lebanon.

While the Jewish soldiers ~~did~~ not know what the right-wing Christian Phalangists militia were doing until after the atrocity, he concludes that the gaps in his memory were a mental defense mechanism. As he tries to reconstruct his memory, he begins to question the degree for which he was responsible in the massacre, even indirectly. While the massacre is scarcely remembered, it was, too briefly, a major international news story.

Much of Folman's *Waltz with Bashir* depicts war as hell. It is an auto-biographical experience to show that once he and other soldiers entered the war zone, their stress level ~~is~~ was elevated 24/7 by their fears ~~of~~ being killed. Tension ~~is~~ sensed from little things happening, including soldiers being trigger happy, shooting at unseen noises or movements caused by a gust of wind. As tension builds up, irrational behavior becomes more pronounced. The audience ~~may~~ begins to realize that Folman is showing us signs of serious mental issues developing.

When I interviewed Folman a few days before the film was shown in San Francisco, I asked what he hoped to achieve by making the film. He replied that his target audience was Israeli youths of draft age and that he wanted to dispel the beliefs that the media often gives us - of the glory of being a soldier. By showing them a war-zone as nerve-wracking experience for a person on the ground, they might have second thoughts about being drafted. He was disappointed that box office reports indicated that the film's actual audience was an older, more mature audience.

Waltz with Bashir grossed over $11 million worldwide, an impressive amount for an animated documentary. It was the first animated feature to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. It won several top awards at major international festivals (Zagreb, France's César, and several others). It was also banned from being screened in Lebanon and in several other Middle Eastern (Arab) nations.

Final comments

People generally think that animation is a light form of entertainment, but these films serve a noble purpose including exposing the lies, misinformation and other honorable things that prejudices create. People need to understand what institutionalized hatred has been doing to our world for centuries. Fortunately, animation can confront and expose the negative effects of racism, nationalism, religious indoctrination and other systems that divide people into stereotyped groups and depict some who are different as inferior.

The animated Holocaust film is part of a growing body of animated documentaries hoping to influence society in some way. This use of the medium to influence us dates back to Winsor McCay's *Sinking of the Lusitania* in 1918, which depicted the enormous loss of life caused by a torpedo that was fired from a German submarine, intentionally in the format of another cinematic innovation of the time - the newsreel. The film was propaganda during "The Great War" more than casually hinting that the audience should detest the perpetrator - the German Kaiser. Since then, animators have created works supporting or disapproving of other wars, capital punishment, various forms of bigotry and dozens of other challenging topics.

Researching animated Holocaust films reminds us all that not only did six million Jews die in Hitler's concentration camps, but that the Fascists exterminated others for trumped up reasons (including being mentally impaired, homosexuals, gypsies, or some perceived inferiority offensive to members of "the master race"). I had assumed the number of non-Jews that Hitler had killed in his gas chambers was significant, but in the thousands. I was stunned to discover over a half-million non-Jewish civilians were slaughtered at his camps (jewishvirtuallibrary.org has further stunning statistics).

Nazi Germany is the easiest monster to clearly represent the embodiment of Evil. There have been other mass murderers of civilians. Stalin was as ruthless as Hitler (estimates that he murdered about five million people in his gulags,and another 5 to 9 million from famine in the 1930s by his mismanagement of agricultural production). But Stalin was our brief ally during WWII, so Tashlin's *Russian Rhapsody* in 1944 was hardly an indictment of his internal purges.

We live at a time when right wing rhetoric has been on the rise and military activities continue to disrupt the lives of millions of people across the globe. The traditional ways of dealing with hatred and war have to change if civilization is going to survive in a world full of weapons so powerful and efficient. The current destruction of Gaza is a sample of what war is capable of doing to civilization.

I grew up admiring Martin Luther King Jr. and I was lucky enough to attend two of his speeches. He tried to teach us to do something that seems to be much harder to do, to turn the other cheek, to love our enemy and to build a better world together. We need to put aside our prejudices and to work harder as a nation. We must take seriously the problems raised with global warming, our polluting the land and seas, public health issues, the rights of women, minorities, and LBGTQ and other important issues. We need persuasive works to call attention to them and hopefully to present positive ideas on how to improve the world.

Why not give peace a chance? We can work that way through animation, or we can live the lesson created in 1939 by Hugh Harman at MGM - his *Peace on Earth* remains powerful and prescient, enlightening as it is sobering. Animation can bring hope - you might consider the advice of Bill Plympton: make it short, make it inexpensive, and make it funny. Or you can make it a labor of love, as Frederic Back's beatific vision in *The Man Who Planted Trees.*

Animation can be effective. Creative people, joining forces with non-profits, can develop films that address serious issues and pitch them to groups that might be in a position to help. Another route is to create personal shorts about issues that you feel are important. It really is possible for you to do your part to help save the planet, one laugh, one smile, one hope at a time.

This study is far from complete. If you have favorite films or materials that should be considered please send information to karlcohen@earthlink.net .

Acknowledgements
Tsvika Oren who lives in Tel Aviv, Israel contributed very useful information to this study. He is an animation scholar who teaches in Israel, and he has published an animation magazine since 2006.

Martha Gorzycki heads the animation program at San Francisco State University, is an advocate of animated documentaries, and has worked on the animated feature Popol Vuh: The Creation Myth of the Maya, 1990, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Nancy Denney-Phelps lives in Gent, Belgium and is an animation historian and journalist. She is a regular contributor to the ASIFA-SF newsletter I write and edit. She mainly covers the international world of animation.

Piotr Kardas from Poland is the author *of Great Animation Short Documentaries of 2023*, an informative illustrated article. He is director of O!PLA, Rising the Lusitania Animadoc Festival, and Craft Animation Festival. An interview with him is posted at Video: Piotr Kardas Interview (zippyframes.com)

Jim Midddleton whom I consult with weekly. He keeps me on my toes as he contributes by refining what I'm thinking and writing about.

Holocaust Representations in Animated Documentaries: The Contours of Commemoration by Liat Steir-Livny, Edinburgh University Press, 264 pages, Hardback $110.00, and as an eBook. It examines representations of the holocaust, holocaust survivors and their descendants in animated documentaries. One promotion for the book says vast majority of animated holocaust documentaries minimize the horrors and instead focus on bravery, resilience, and hope. Knowledge that the book exists introduced me to the topic of animated Holocaust film.

Finding Your Roots on PBS, with historian Henry Lewis Gates Jr. as the host, also influenced this study. Guests on the show learn well researched facts about their family's history. That information sometimes includes facts about relatives who disappeared in the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide and in other horrible moments in history.

Animated Thoughts with Chuck Wilson

"Art Comes in Many Forms - Part Six"
(see his blog at https://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com - this essay is his introduction to MMXXV)

I had hoped to end the old year and begin the new with some art and peaceful introspection. The Flint Institute of Arts did not disappoint.

Now I'll cop to it, looking at the main art museums in the Mid-Michigan corridor (Grand Rapids/East Lansing/Flint/Detroit), I vastly favor the Detroit Institute of Arts. But the smaller art museums here in Michigan have their charms. The Frederik Meijer Gardens has their yearly butterfly and orchid events as well as a wonderful outdoor Japanese garden. I haven't yet been to the Grand Rapids Art Museum, though I do hope to change that oversight later this year. The Broad Art Museum is a quick five minute drive from my home with a basement area housing older works of art and a video installation--and it's a quick walk from the MSU Library, good for research. Detroit has the DIA as well as the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village--all three had been invaluable resources when I was writing my animation history class.

But the Flint Institute of Arts has some really appealing qualities, not the least of which is a 45 minute drive from my home (as opposed to the hour/hour-and-a-half to the DIA, depending on traffic). They've also got a well-stocked library with comfortable chairs and a sofa for reading.

The decision of where I would spend my day was resolved almost immediately when I checked the FIA's website and discovered that they had a painting on display by my favorite artist: Claude Monet. Turns out, "The Sheltered Path" was on their visiting artwork list and would be on display until February.

As I stared at Monet's painting, I was struck by the impermanence of digital. There I sat, looking at a painting from 1873. The colors may not be as vibrant as when it was first painted, but still a beautiful work of art that, if properly handled, would still be there long after I am but a memory.

"The Sheltered Path", 1873
Claude Monet

Over the past thirty years, I've witnessed countless works of art brought to life through computer software. I've been there during software releases and upgrades, and yes, witnessed software once touted as the 'latest and greatest' denoted as reaching their 'end-of-life' before being relegated to the dustbin of digital history.

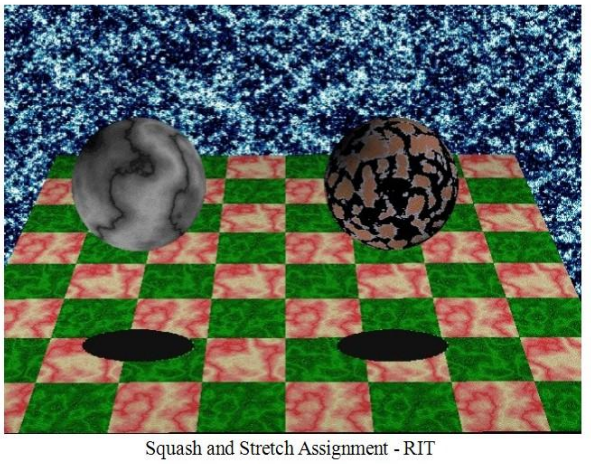
3d CGI, polygonal modelling, NURBS, metaballs, texture mapping, bump mapping, non-linear video editing, Corel Draw, Paint Shop Pro, Photoshop, Painter, Kai's Power Tools, Director, After Effects, Future Splash/Flash, Moho, Bernoulli drives, iOmega Zip Drives. I was there for much it. Oftentimes on the sidelines, sometimes in the trenches.

The march of technology is relentless. It's partially why I maintain a number of old computers with obsolete operating systems that are still capable of running some of this older software--so I can still access old copies of animations and imagery that I produced during my college and grad school days.

The computer has brought us works of art that were hitherto undreamt of. I doubt that even the old masters could have conceived of what is being produced by contemporary digital artists. I have to wonder, how constrained were their imaginations by the technology of their time? Thought for another day.

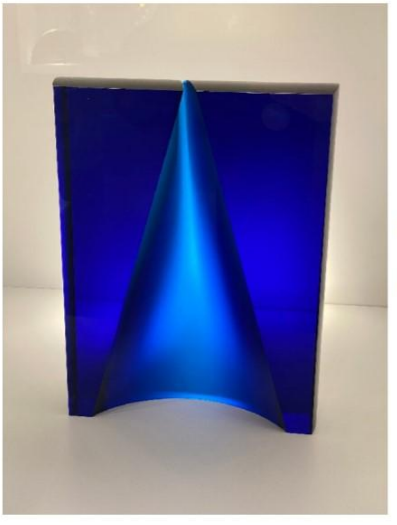
Back when I was in grad school at R.I.T., I had been playing with a freeware 3d rendering and animation software package called POV-Ray. It was a text based

system where you'd plot everything out on graph paper using the Mark I pencil, then create a text file containing all the objects, their coordinates, and their properties for your scene. I was big on stone textures back then, so spent a fair amount of time making marbles using the various texture settings. This would serve me well when I needed objects to animate in my basic animation classes--like learning the squash and stretch principle by animating bouncing balls using Macromedia Director.



Squash and Stretch Assignment - RIT

Since then, I have tinkered with lots of 3d modelling and animation packages like Alias Wavefront/Maya, Ray Dream Studio/Carrara, and Blender. But while useful and entertaining, none of those programs produce anything of permanence. I do still like to walk through museums and look at sculptures--mostly those of stone and glass--and think about how I would recreate them using 3d CGI software. It's a fun thought exercise and it adds an extra dimension to museum visits that makes them more enjoyable for me.



Hadros
2006
Petr Hora

Sculpture, paintings, celluloid film, animation cels, photographs from the early 1900's, even the hand-drawn paper cels from my MFA thesis, they will all outlive me. My thesis film is digital. Unless I do a transfer to celluloid film stock, one day, it will likely be gone with only the hand drawn cels and a couple printed images in my thesis paper as evidence that it ever existed. If care has been taken to preserve them, one hundred years later, we can still watch films from the 1920's. One-hundred and fifty-two years later, I can still spend an afternoon looking at one of Claude Monet's paintings hanging there on the wall. Over five hundred years later, we can still travel to Florence and appreciate Michelangelo's marble sculpture "David".

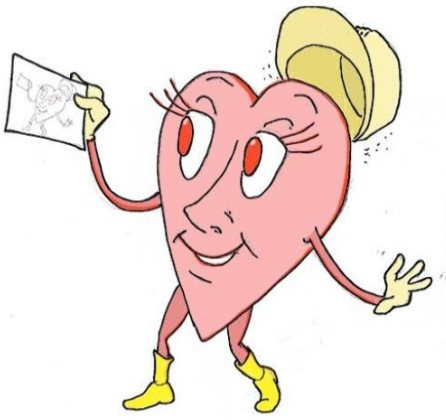
Still Life with Fruit", 1855
Severin Roesen

I have to wonder, five-hundred years from now, will people even know about all the art we created in the late 20th/early 21st Century? Or will there be this huge cultural gap where art was being produced in physical format up until the 1980's and then it largely ceased. What will the museums of 2525 say about us? Will they even remember that we existed or will we just be a footnote in history, this big black hole of nothing called 'the digital age' where very few items of cultural significance survived to be appreciated by future generations?

Chuck Wilson is a forensic animator and master of all Dungeons and Dragons in the greater East Lansing, Michigan area. His computer collection is the envy of anyone who understands the importance of data backup, even if it means a zip-drive.

ASIFA Central

2025 Newsletter for ASIFA Central No. 2



Feb-March "IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!" MMXXV^AoDi

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Occasionally Bothersome Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

ZOOM Coffee Host
Michael Long

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President for All ASIFArians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
The Indestructible Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

International Correspondents
Vivi Markatos
Schweta Marathe

The Debut of the 2025 IAD Poster by Lucija Mrzljak

Lucija Mrzljak is a Croatian animation film director teaching at the Estonian Academy of Fine Arts. Since 2016, Lucija directed several acclaimed animated short films, produced at the Eesti Joonisfilm studio in Tallinn, and Adriatic Animation studio in Zagreb. Her film *Eeva* (2022) premiered at the Berlinale in 2023, earning a place on the shortlist for the 2024 Academy Awards, and then the Emile Awards for best character and background design.

More + + + + + + + + + + +

Lucija Mrzljak continued
In addition to her film work, Lucija collaborated with Oscar-winning musician Glen Hansard in 2019, directing the music video for *The Closing Door*. In 2024, she directed renowned Estonian musician Mari Kalkun's music video for her song *Maaimä (Mother Earth)*.

As in years past, her IAD poster will serve as an inspiration for an ASIFA member Anijam. Each of us will be giving Lucija Mrzljak copious thanks and credit for her contribution.

Lucija's vision statement:

"For my ASIFA World Animation Day poster, I embraced a classical approach, working with graphite and colour pencil on paper to create a tangible, hand-drawn aesthetic. The central inspiration behind the poster is the concept of animation as "light in the dark," a creative force that illuminates and brings life to the unseen. I also drew inspiration from the visionary pioneers of animation, such as Émile Reynaud, Eadweard Muybridge, Joseph Plateau, and Simon Stampfer. The poster pays homage to their legacy while celebrating the timeless artistry of animation. Animation continues to evolve as a powerful medium for storytelling and self-expression, inspiring new generations to push creative boundaries and keep the light shining."

Animation for Peace Project

A reminder from Bri Yarhouse at Interlochen

This year I would also like to announce that we are fostering a worldwide effort to use our animation talents to bring attention to all of our needs to live in peace without the threat of violence. Killing each other never solves our conflicts and the world faces so many types of violent conflicts. In this regard, I am shortly going to make a formal request for animators of all ages to join us in making short films on the subject of peace that will be shown on International Animation Day this year.

Animation Student Awards Forging Onward!

Anastasia Dimitra, ASIFA Hellas

Entry deadline: February 15, 2025 (just passed, but plead your case if you feel particularly charming this season)

Selection Committee review deadline: March 10, 2025
Jury Committee results deadline: March 30, 2025

∅ There is no need be an ASIFA member.
∅ ASIFA chapters, after careful evaluation, may propose up to five films each.
∅ The submitted films in HDV .mp4 format will be available for screenings at all chapters over a one-year period.
∅ All directors will be required to sign a contract with ASIFA, stipulating that, following the competition, ASIFA may use the films for screenings during the one-year period.
∅ ASIFA will provide screening reports to all directors at the end of this period.

We have so far received submissions from ASIFA East and Central, Spain, Germany, India, and Croatia. I would also like to encourage you to submit student films, as they are a valuable part of the selection.

If you are interested in joining the Selection or Jury Committee, please feel free to reach out.

At this time, Jim Middleton has confirmed his participation, while Nelson Shin and Nancy Denney Phelps have committed to the Jury Committee.

Looking forward to your responses.

Please send the requested materials to Anastasia Dimitra at anadimitra1@gmail.com.

Postcards - Take TWO!

from Deanna Morse

ASIFA members are invited to submit up to 3 works for consideration for the second edition of ASIFA promotional postcards. The postcards will feature up to 25 members' artwork on the front side and information about ASIFA on the back. They will be distributed at ASIFA events, including at our partner animation festivals this summer. Both previously existing and new work will be considered.

Postcards - continued

Submission deadline for the first edition print run is March 31, 2025. The final selection will be curated by the ASIFA Communications Team and printed for distribution in 2025. Additional editions may be printed in the future.

Check your film frame files! Please read the submission form carefully for formatting and additional guidelines -

SUBMIT *HERE*
https://forms.gle/PuczkbfWs6CWvqQFA

In the meantime, in-between time, view the wildly popular 2024 Edition Postcard Gallery at

https://asifa.net/asifa-international-postcard-exhibition-2024/

February's ASIFA Central Coffee

hosted by Michael Long of Webster University

On February 6, a dozen members, tried and true, leaned into the Zoom with a View, pressed the appropriate keys, and rolled home with stuffed noggins to share the evening events with all who had ears and, ultimately, glazed eyes.

Animations for Peace will be the goal and theme for this year's group projects amid the international chapters, seeking the noble ambition of a life without violence, demonstrated visually, 8-12 seconds at a time. Bri Yarhouse of Interlochen, head of the IAD for the international ASIFA, has created a program for 2025 that should be aligned for showing at this year's IAD.

A Few Upcoming Animation/Film Festivals

⋐

Monstra fest - Portugal - March 20-30
Ann Arbor Film Festival - March 25-30, award programs March 30-April 13
Happy Valley Animation Festival - March 26-April 2
Rochester International Film Festival - May 1-3
Stuttgart - May 6-11
Zagreb - June 2-7
Annecy - June 8 -14
TAC - September 24-26
OIAF - September 24-28

⋑

Deanna Morse, Serene President of all ASIFA Chapters on this, the best of all possible inhabitable planets in our immediate light-speed time zone, also encouraged international participation in the upcoming Stuttgart and Zagreb festivals.

We were all reminded that our passports technically are effective until their expiry date, but with international travel, the concern of being in a host country when they expire means that you should have at *least six months left* on the document before departure.

Chris Robinson of OIAF and Agnes Li of ASIFA are seeking material, and we don't mean woolens! Have any stray words lying around, seeking an inky future in print?

Vivi shared her latest creation, a "silent book" called *The Magic Marker*. "Silent books are like storyboards!" Their advantage is to communicate an idea visually, and help make the intention known to those who may struggle with verbal communication.

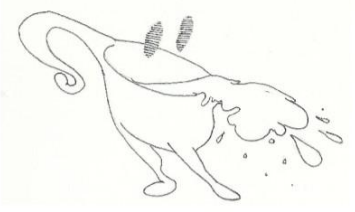
And amid all the grasping for the latest technologies, there's an intentional struggle to make ToonBoom animation look more analog. Go Raster! We have run the cycle. Take *that,* AI!

The Joyful Gallery of Rogues

This year's nominated films, whether by the Academy, Golden Globe, or Annies, seem to operate on a more humanitarian level - the sensitive cooperation of the animals of *Flow,* the sweetness of *Wild Robot* indicate less shock and more awe on the animated screen.

And then the conversation slipped to humorous matters among the lingering zoomers:

(Excerpts from Jim's blog, later)
"OK, we got to talking about classic comedians last night at the ASIFA coffee, after musing about *just what isn't funny*, and the names Harry Langdon and Pierre Etaix percolated up (and I'm afraid, I was the main instigator). Langdon has gotten a bum rap in the opinion of yr hmbl typst, perpetuated by Walter Kerr in his otherwise amazing 1970s book, *The Silent Clowns*. The lack of access to his films - especially the later Warner releases - helped support the allegation over the years, but now his complete silent output has been made available on DVD, and online (and some of his early talkies from the Hal Roach Studios). Actually viewing the films proves otherwise. In fact, I contend he was the silent era's equivalent to Andy Kaufman, because, when left to his own devices, he could be utterly twisted and surreal. It didn't hurt that he was also an accomplished cartoonist.



"Pierre Etaix was a writer for the French auteur Jacques Tati (*Mon Oncle, Les Vacances de Mssr Hulot, Playtime, Trafic* - many of those films currently on the Criterion Channel) who was a fierce fan of Keaton and later, of Jerry Lewis (The unfinished Lewis "worst film" of *The Day the Clown Cried* is floating around in truncated form, but it may have benefitted by the collaboration with Etaix). Anyway - Etaix's films were not fully his. As a result, the Etaix gems, and they truly are gems, were unseen in the US until the last decade. My widdle head went kerBOOM when I came upon them on Turner Classics, and I immediately ordered the whole set, and then sent Etaix a gushing fan letter - only to have it returned a month later because...*he had DIED*. It gave me flashbacks to trying to contact Harold Lloyd as a tween in the early 1970s or Tati as a semi-adult in the 1980s. Anyway, here are some links to the films associated with this rambling discussion (thank the coffee, the 20 degrees and 30mph wind outside, and a dog not letting me out of her sight until she gets fed for contributing to this extensive bit of typing). SO - if you're interested, here's a way to kill some *more* time!

Harry Langdon:
Three's a Crowd - 15 minutes in inspired a similar scene in "Seule Tod" by yr hmbl typst - this film has him trying for "pathos" in between moments of nitrate decomposition:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zemRj97rAek
(warning - there is an unfortunate moment of "blackface" amid the ruins of this movie)

The Chaser - 56 minutes into it is the most bizarre "seduction" ever put to film. This was his final feature for Warner's to be released - they never distributed his completed feature after this one, which is now considered a "lost films."
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6EQOuC2n6Q

If you want to see how a career can be demolished by alcohol, check out the 1935 feature from Columbia, *Atlantic Adventure*. He plays a reporter's sidekick, "Snappy," and he is impaired on-screen to a greater degree than Barrymore managed to be in *Grand Hotel*. On youtube -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ3XAm99nD8

And now, for Pierre Etaix:
Rupture - 1961 - the consequences of writing to a girlfriend who is no longer friendly - the sounds were recorded in post-production, often provided by Etaix himself because the studio foley man wanted to stick to stock noises. It's an otherwise silent one-reeler, deliciously fatalistic.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxOg4rmhnKM

Happy Anniversary - 1962
Reminiscent of One Week, a young married couple is thwarted in their celebration by the lack of parking.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsjIbZ_YD7k&t=10s

Yoyo - excerpt from feature - 1965
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwP8miXVl7I

And the infamous *The Day the Clown Cried* - a 30 minute assembly of clips, uncovered by David Thrasher during the evening's discussions:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0vF8FKuljU

ANNIE Awards 2024

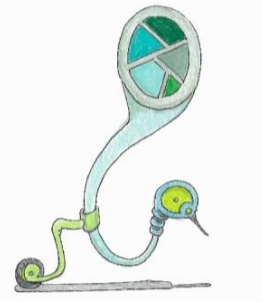
The awards came on the wild Sunday evening of February 9, punctuated by fire alarms going off at the UCLA's Royce Hall, and featured animation notables with gleeful vocal projections. When ASIFA Hollywood Executive Director Aubrey Mintz wrapped up the long evening, the zoetropes for the Best of Everything were spinning for ... the envelope please!

Best Feature - *Wild Robot*, DreamWorks
Bests Independent Feature - *Flow*, Sacrebleu Productions
Best Special Production - *Orion and the Dark*, DreamWorks
Best Short Subject - *Wander to Wonder*, Circe Films, et al
Best Sponsored - *Fuzzy Feelings*, Passion Pictures Hungry Man
Best TV/Media, Preschool - *The Tiny Chef Show*, Imagine Entertainment
Best TV/Media, Children - *Marvel's Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur*, Flying Bark Productions
Best TV/Media, Mature - *Bob's Burgers*, 20th Television Animation
Best TV/Media, Limited Series - *A Night to Remember*, Pixar
Best Student Film - *Adios*, Jose Prats
Best FX, TV/Media, *Arcane*, Fortune Studio
Best FX Feature - *The Wild Robot*, DreamWorks
Best Character Animation, Feature - *Arcane*, Fortune Studio
Best Character Animation, Live Action - *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*, 20th Century Studios
Best Character Animation, Video Game - *Neva*, Nomada Studios
Best Character Design, TV/ Media - *Marvel's Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur*, Disney TV
Best Character Design, Feature - *The Wild Robot*, DreamWorks
Best Direction, TV/ Media - *Arcane* - Arnaud Delord, Pascal Charrue, Bart Maunoury
Best Direction, Feature - *The Wild Robot*, Chris Sanders
Best Music, TV/Media - *Arcane*, Ryan Jillian Santiago, Alexander Seaver, Simon Wilcox
Best Music, Feature - *The Wild Robot*, Kris Bowers
Best Production Design, TV/Media - *Arcane*, Riot Games for Netflix
Best Production Design, Feature - *The Wild Robot*, Raymond Zibach, Ritchie Sacilioc
Best Storyboarding, TV/Media - *Arcane,* Josephine Meis
Best Storyboarding, Feature - *Despicable Me 4*, Illumination, Habib Louati
Best Voice Acting, TV/Media - *Dream Productions*, Pixar, Paula Pell (as character Paula)
Best Voice Acting, Feature - *The Wild Robot*, Lupita Nyong'o (as character Roz)
Best Writing, TV/Media - *Orion and the Dark.* Charlie Kaufman
Best Writing, Feature - *Flow*, Gints Zibalodis
Best Editorial, TV/Media - *Arcane,* Nazim Meslem
Best Editorial, Feature - *The Wild Robot*, Mary Blee

Comment by Michael Long on the ANNIES

"I enjoyed watching the awards, too. I skipped some parts as needed to get to the more interesting speeches (though some commentary as winners walked to the stage was worth hearing). It was nice to have it be all about animation. I loved seeing the younger winners so excited about suddenly being in the spotlight. And it was fun to see them in Royce Hall at UCLA, where as a student I used to put up posters for various shows and events and see some of them for free—like William Windom portraying James Thurber; Bruce Dern talking about being in a new movie called Smile and letting us know what it was like to work with Hitchcock; the British poet Stephen Spender, reading poetry; and Buckminster Fuller talking about, well, whatever was on his fertile mind that evening."

"On this Day of Hearts, this amour mosaic,
We cerebrate love with Christmas cheer –
If only my prose were more prosaic,
This Day of Hearts could last all year!"



Signe Baumane Fundraising for Karmic Knot!

Our 2024 fall retreat speaker and presenter of her most recent feature, *My Love Affair With Marriage* is raising money for her next feature, already in production! Donations will be doubled by another benefactor equally entranced with the project. Some notes from Signe:
"Because of your support, my Team and I in Brooklyn can continue to work on sets and animation ... because we are not just making a film, we are creating a community around it, with like-minded people. Together, we can find hope and bring inspiration to other people."

The matching-funds campaign, will end on April 1st.

Here's a link with details on Signe's new project:

https://www.myloveaffairwithmarriagemovie.com/post/love-money-and-karmic-knot

https://www.myloveaffairwithmarriage.com

A Moment with Chuck Wilson's Bountiful Blog

Animated Thoughts: A surprising find in a surprising place
(from https://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com/2025/01/animated-thoughts-surprising-find-in.html)

This past weekend, I flew to New Orleans for my brother-in-law's 60th birthday party--what we all were calling "John Con 2025" by the end of the weekend. Hadn't seen that side of the family for a while and John is a great guy, so when I got the invite, there really was no decision to make, just a little shuffling of cash from one account to another to pay for the plane ticket and hotel.

Beignets!

My sister, ever the planner, had a series of "group" events set up for everyone to celebrate John's birthday but there was also some free time available where we could wander New Orleans by ourselves and do a little exploring.

Well, true to form, she selected our first meetup at the Café du Monde on the north side of town. Not the one by the waterfront where I had been before, no, this was the one a five minute walk from the New Orleans Museum of Art. So after getting sugared up on beignets, it was time to get moving and walk off some of that breakfast. The pre-planned walking tour of the French Quarter wouldn't be until the early afternoon, so I had time to walk across the street to the New Orleans Museum of Art.

The first surprise was seeing a Claude Monet painting that I've never seen in person before. 'Houses' is a bit of a departure from the flowing pastels that I'm used to. But it's a welcome one as it still displays Monet's signature brush strokes and stylization.

Another exhibit I really enjoyed was their special exhibit on the history of glasswork. There were multiple examples of ceramics and glasswork all around the museum, but this exhibit was a more expansive history of glasswork from around the world with examples spanning a wide range of techniques and styles. If you're in the area, it's worth checking out. As I took the photos, my mind was going a mile-a-minute figuring out how I'd model them in 3d CGI.

"Tumble-up" cup and decanter, c.1860

Decanter, c 1880 - Uranium Glass

Necklace with 19 miniature Easter Eggs from the workshop of Carl Fabergé

But the surprise of the visit was seeing a painting by artist Wayne Thiebaud.

Salmon Rose, 1966

On the placard, it stated "Disney animator", though my cursory research only revealed that he was an inbetweener for Disney during one summer before going on to producing commercial art, achieving a Masters degree in art history, and teaching at the University of California, Davis (among other accomplishments). [1]

Although I'm clearly biased here given the subject, I still think that it's the mark of a really good display that causes you to want to learn more about the artist, the art style or movement, or what influenced the artist when they were creating said artwork. Yes, I admit it, I'm one of those weirdos that you see in the museum, sitting down and looking at their smartphones while surrounded by priceless works of art. Well, more often than not, it's because I've seen something that sparks an interest and I want to know more about the artist or the times that they lived in. So rather than look it up later, I prefer to do my research immediately. If I take a couple pictures and promise myself that I'll do some research when I get home, well, more often than not life does tend to get in the way so better to capitalize on the moment.

So, I'd like to give props to the NOMA and their curators for putting together a very interesting collection of artwork. I wish that I would have had more time to enjoy their museum and sculpture park, but NOMA is now on my list of museums that deserve a return visit when I'm back in the area.

* * *

Endnote:

[1] https://web.archive.org/web/20110428144554/http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/Wayne-Thiebaud-is-Not-a-Pop-Artist.html

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SO, UNTIL NEXT TIME:

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) February-March 2025, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Make sure to check our Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral *and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - and be sure to check out the Facebook page - ANIZOOMATION -* https://www.facebook.com/groups/342482260109209/

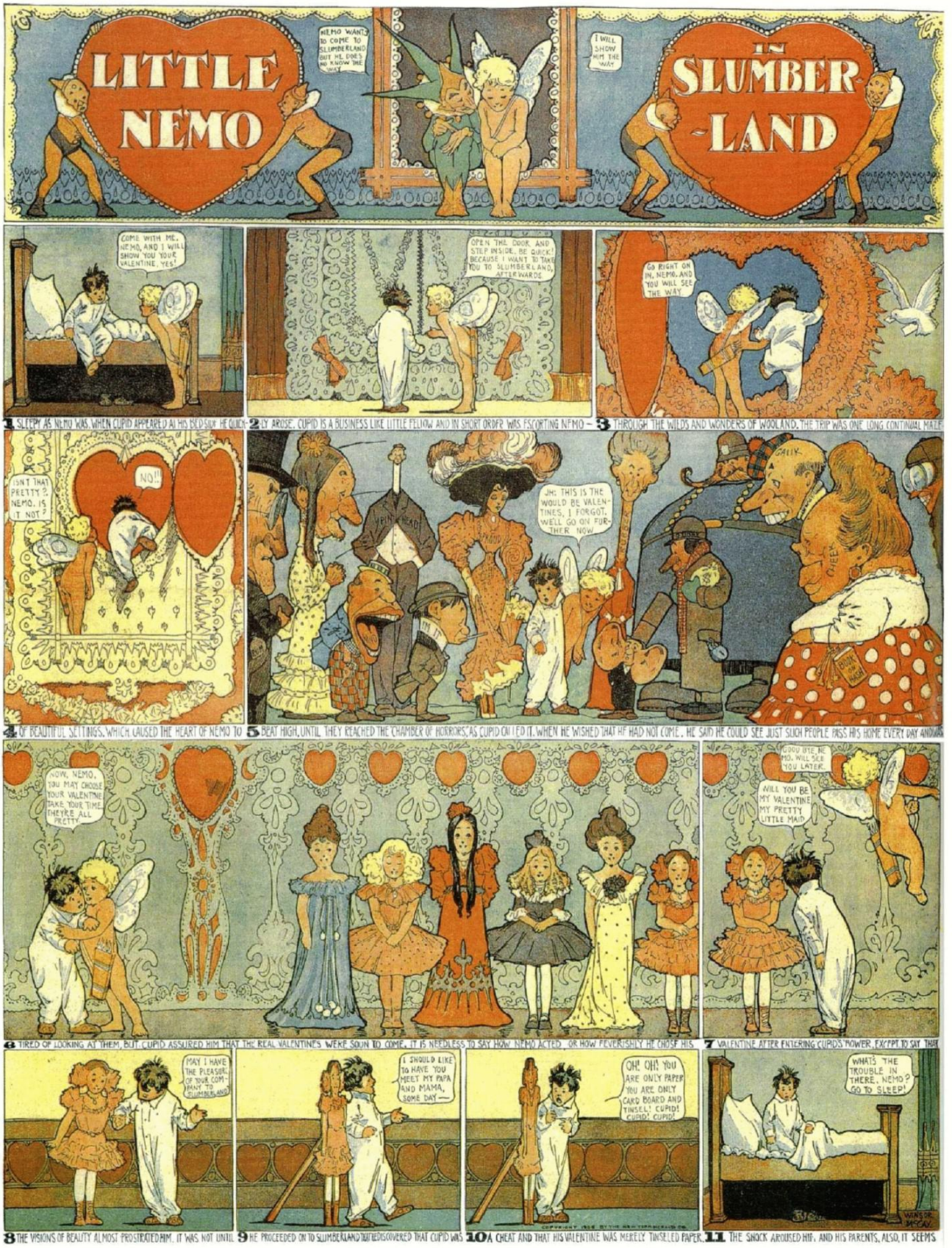
ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or zoetrope camera settings that actually work, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for his dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.

Psst! Free-Range Board Member *Deanna Morse* *(Madame President to All ASIFAnians!) has a new web-site: deannamorse.com*


LITTLE NEMO
IN SLUMBER-LAND
NEMO WANTS TO COME TO SLUMBERLAND BUT HE DOES NO KNOW THE WAY
I WILL SHOW HIM THE WAY
COME WITH ME, NEMO, AND I WILL SHOW YOU YOUR VALENTINE, YES!
OPEN THE DOOR AND STEP INSIDE. BE QUICK! BECAUSE I WANT TO TAKE YOU TO SLUMBERLAND, AFTERWARDS
GO RIGHT ON IN, NEMO, AND YOU WILL SEE THE WAY
1 SLEEPY AS NEMO WAS, WHEN CUPID APPEARED AT HIS BEDSIDE HE QUICK-
2 LY AROSE. CUPID IS A BUSINESS LIKE LITTLE FELLOW AND IN SHORT ORDER WAS ESCORTING NEMO —
3 THROUGH THE WILDS AND WONDERS OF WOODLAND. THE TRIP WAS ONE LONG CONTINUAL MAZE
ISN'T THAT PRETTY, NEMO. IS IT NOT?
NO!!
4 OF BEAUTIFUL SETTINGS, WHICH CAUSED THE HEART OF NEMO TO
5 BEAT HIGH, UNTIL THEY REACHED THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS, AS CUPID CALLED IT. WHEN HE WISHED THAT HE HAD NOT COME. HE SAID HE COULD SEE JUST SUCH PEOPLE PASS HIS HOME EVERY DAY AND WAS
OH! THIS IS THE WOULD BE VALENTINES, I FORGOT. WELL, GO ON FURTHER NOW
VEIN HEAD
GALIK
CHEEK
NOW, NEMO, YOU MAY CHOOSE YOUR VALENTINE. TAKE YOUR TIME. THEY'RE ALL PRETTY
6 TIRED OF LOOKING AT THEM, BUT CUPID ASSURED HIM THAT THE REAL VALENTINES WERE SOON TO COME. IT IS NEEDLESS TO SAY HOW NEMO ACTED, OR HOW FEVERISHLY HE CHOSE HIS
GOOD BYE NEMO. WILL SEE YOU LATER.
WILL YOU BE MY VALENTINE, MY PRETTY LITTLE MAID
7 VALENTINE. AFTER ENTERING CUPIDS POWER, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT
MAY I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY TO SLUMBERLAND
I SHOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOU MEET MY PAPA AND MAMA, SOME DAY —
OH! OH! YOU ARE ONLY PAPER YOU ARE ONLY CARD BOARD AND TINSEL! CUPID! CUPID!
WHAT'S THE TROUBLE IN THERE, NEMO? GO TO SLEEP!
8 THE VISIONS OF BEAUTY ALMOST PROSTRATED HIM. IT WAS NOT UNTIL
9 HE PROCEEDED ON TO SLUMBERLAND THAT HE DISCOVERED THAT CUPID WAS
10 A CHEAT AND THAT HIS VALENTINE WAS MERELY TINSELED PAPER.
11 THE SHOCK AROUSED HIM, AND HIS PARENTS, ALSO, IT SEEMS

ASIFA Central

Red Worm Moon Issue

March-April "IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!" MMXXV (2025)

The ASIFA Central Board

promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, and Occasionally Bothersome Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

ZOOM Coffee Host
Michael Long

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President for All ASIFArians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
The Indestructible Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

International Correspondents
Vivi Markatos
Schweta Marathe

ASIFA Kicks Off Year-Long Celebration of 65th Anniversary

A Report from Deanna Morse, ASIFA International President
president@asifa.net

The International Animated Film Association, ASIFA is celebrating its 65th anniversary with a variety of exciting initiatives throughout the year. ASIFA's mission has always been to connect animators worldwide and promote the art of animation. As a global umbrella organization, ASIFA supports unique regional groups and chapters across the world.

Chapters are hosting a range of vibrant local and national activities, including film festivals, workshops, screenings, and celebratory events. The spring celebration has already kicked off with retrospective screenings, awards, and seminars at notable festivals, including the *Cairo Animatex Festival* (Egypt), and the *Monstra Animation Festival* (Portugal). Summer brings the Zagreb International Animation Festival (Croatia), and the Annecy International Animation Festival (France), with even more activities planned for the rest of the year.

A Few Highlights:

• **International Animation Day**: ASIFA has issued a call for very short films about peace to be streamed on October 28, 2025, in celebration of the birthday of animation. https://asifa.net/asifa-peace-for-the-planet/

• **Special Anniversary Cash Award**: ASIFA will sponsor a special cash award at select festivals to recognize the anniversary.

• **ASIFA Student Award and ASIFA Member's Postcard Gallery**: These popular initiatives are underway, celebrating the talent and creativity of the animation community.

• **ASIFA Prize Retrospective Screenings:** Curated screenings of ASIFA Prize winners will be showcased at several major festivals.

• **Zagreb Animation Festival**: ASIFA will host a General Assembly meeting, and animator Sayoko Kinoshita will be honored with the prestigious ASIFA Prize for Lifetime Achievement.

(More! Λ)

• **Annecy Animation Festival:** A major gathering is being organized by ASIFA Hellas, Hollywood, China, and others to celebrate the milestone anniversary.

In addition, ***ASIFA Magazine*** *and the* ***ASIFA Academic Journal*** will highlight the organization's history, achievements, and future directions.
For the past 65 years, ASIFA has worked tirelessly to connect animators around the globe, celebrate the art of animation, and foster cultural exchange, all while upholding the values of peace, love, and tolerance.
For more details on these activities, visit https://asifa.net

And A Reminder About Those Postcards for IAD 2025

ASIFA Postcard callout - March 31 last day
(from asifa.net)

Back by popular demand, ASIFA will unveil the second edition of its Member's Postcard Gallery at festivals this summer.

ASIFA International members are invited to ***submit up to 3 works*** for consideration for a curated run of ASIFA promotional postcards. The postcards will feature member's artwork on the front side and information about ASIFA on the back. They will be distributed at ASIFA events at major festivals. Both previously existing and new work will be considered.

Members are invited to submit designs by March 31, 2025 for consideration. Twenty-five (count 'em, 25!) images will be selected, printed ***and distributed at festivals worldwide.***

Postcard Submissions at this link -

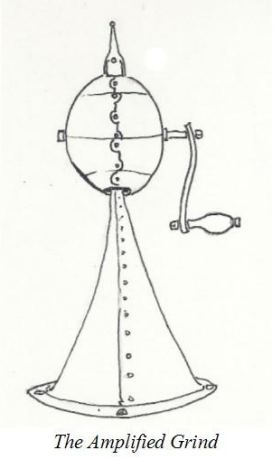
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfNPOq9hOJUnYo6pCOQYOg-jX_JdyyrZUBT8cXwO10eClVYCg/viewform

And the postcard gallery from 2024 is here!

https://asifa.net/asifa-international-postcard-exhibition-2024/ *(Our own Peaches Wilczak's selection is just above!)*

The March 6 Coffee Chew

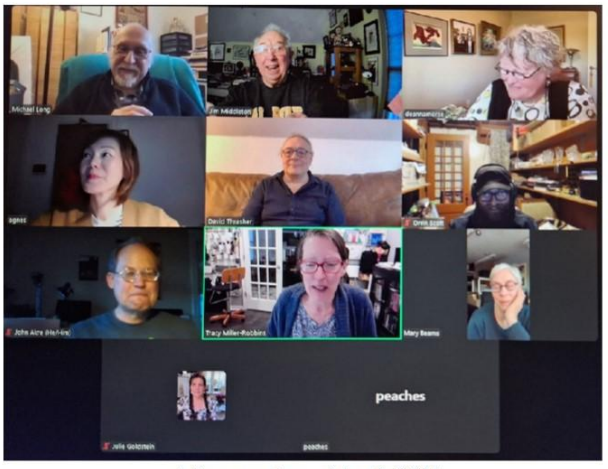
Michael Long remained the host with the most in March, and the near-dozen members who tuned in from areas far and exotic had plenty to bring to the table that fateful Thursday evening. He celebrates his 40th year teaching at Webster University in St. Louis (er, *Saint* Louis, as the post office now demands), Missouri.



The Amplified Grind

Deanna Morse reminded everyone that the *asifa.net* site has updated information on the ASIFA 65th anniversary, along with an updated link to its *Academic Journal* . She is preparing for Mostre (starting March 21), Bri Yarhouse is en route to India, and postcard versions of the 2025 IAD poster are available for members who provide her (or yr hmbl typst) with a snail mail address. Agnes Li extended greetings from Sheridan College and politely endured yr hmbl typst's theory that all diplomacy in Asia requires a certain immersion in the societal impact of Astro Boy.

The ASIFA International general assembly will be in Zagreb, Croatia this year (June 2-7).
https://www.animafest.hr/en



A Beaming Lot - March 2025

The Award Came Back!

Mary Beams tuned in from the far reaches of Minnesota and shared recollections with John Akre of the Walker Art Center, sharing her Zagreb award that was in storage, then discarded, then retrieved and returned by someone who considered it a genuine Major Award.

Mary Beams' *Tub Film* from 1972

https://vimeo.com/183330860

Orrin Scott has updated his massive bibliography and continues to prepare for a second edition release: https://cartoonresearch.com/index.php/the-animation-history-bibliography/

Tracy Miller-Robbins remains the most overbusy instructor in the entire megaverse, animating students among three colleges in the sprawling midwest. (Record all mileage!) The Official Tracy Miller Robbins website for *no entry fee festivals* still exists and is undergoing revisions and updates.

https://noentryfeefestivals.com/author/noentryfeefestivals/

President Julie Goldstein recollected her "entry to animaton" came via her fascination with sculpture. Forested regions of the Chicago area still exhibit specimens of her creativity, cherished by the elusive sylphs and pixies. Mind your step! She related that SIGGRAPH (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SIGGRAPH) wants to return to clay this year for its improvisational quality, a meld of quantum computation and organic material. She lives the maxim to "get lost in your work and the work reveals itself."

Online, *spacejam.com* is STILL a functional website from the time of the film's release - 1996 preserved in digital amber.

ASIFA PEACE for the PLANET

Creating Short Animations for Peace - via Bri Yarhouse

Join us to promote peace around the globe with your animation. We want to speak out against killing one another as the answer to conflict.

Today, there are over 28 armed conflicts that are occurring across the globe. How do we as an organization respond? When ASIFA was chartered in 1960 it was partly in response to a world at war.

Provisioned under UNESCO, Peace has been one of the tenets of interchange between animators and our differing cultures. As the UNESCO vision statement states:

"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that peace must be built." (UNESCO)

Inspired by Russian Animators who spoke out against war with Ukraine, we want to promote Peace everywhere. No matter what you believe or how you disagree with one another, violence and killing is not the answer. All creatures have the right to live in peace.

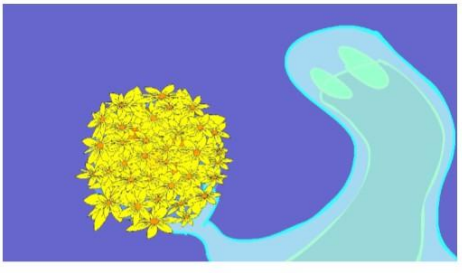
Animations created and shared will be shown world-wide streaming on International animation day

(October 28, 2025) and possibly be collected into a selection for showing theatrically at festivals and be used as part of a social media campaign. They will be shared freely without financial gain for anyone.

Guidelines for PEACE submissions:

- DEADLINE: September 1, 2025
- 8 to 11 seconds for each short animated film
- Pixel dimensions should be either 1920 x 1080 (HD) or 3840 x 2160 (4K UHD)
- H.264 compression
- Credits should not be embedded in the short film but provided separately. Animators have the option of being anonymous to reflect the potential personal danger of being targeted
- Each short should end with the word "Peace" in the personal language of the animator.
- Animations must include their own sound and be royalty free and able to be shown without restrictions.
- Animators must agree to the Creative Commons licensing: CC BY NC ND 4.0.
- Content is subject to the animators choice but must be a response to our theme of peace in the world, however they interpret this.
- ASIFA is not responsible for the content.

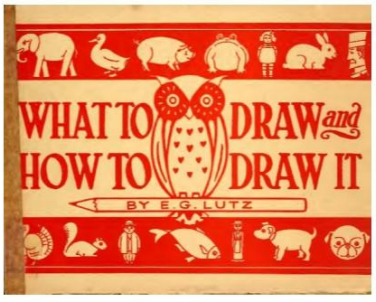
Full Information at asifa.net, specifically,
https://asifa.net/asifa-peace-for-the-planet/
And, of course, the entry form:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGbn4V22weoUZ_BrvdGbyRlhoX8Q5IIgHZMs3wCF66YmTt2Q/viewform



CVM Update - A Fundraiser
Rare Materials Moving Due to California fires

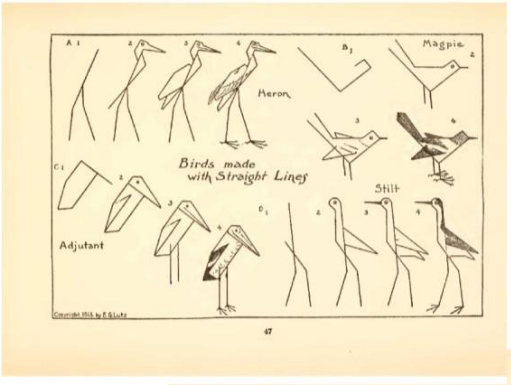
CVM extends huge thanks to those who've donated so far to our *GoFundMe* campaign to move collections out of LA, for safety. There will be more wildfires in LA, it's just a question of time. We've only raised 14% of the goal (as of March 2025), so donations of even $10 or 10 euro all helps and adds up.

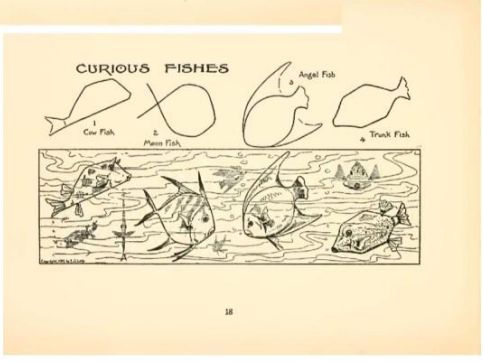
Huge thanks to CVM members, the animation and film communities, colleagues at museums, festivals and venues, and thanks to other kind friends. All their names are on the *GoFundMe* page. Thanks also to in-kind help from Screen Novelties, LA.
https://gofund.me/5386d614
Cindy Keefer - Center for Visual Music
www.centerforvisualmusic.org



1913 - How to Draw - Lutz pdf on archive.org
88 pages, free to download

E.G. Lutz published his *Animated Cartoons* in 1920, inspiring some lad named Disney to get into the business. Seven years before, however, Lutz wrote another basic text on creating comic characters for the public that preferred its cartoons a bit more *static*. This 88 page treatise is now on archive.org, free for download and/or perusal.
https://archive.org/details/whattodrawhowtod00lutz





Vivi and Broccoli

the mellifluous melodies in an untranslated language

Vivi Markatos talking about broccoli

Xrista Kritkkou talking about broccoli

From an aural viewpoint, English seems like such a flat language. You can speak it **LOUDLY,** you can speak it (softly**),** you can speakitsofastyoucannotunderstandit or so ssssssslllllllllllllllloooooooooooooooooooooowwwwly that nobody cares.

Non-English languages seem so melodic by comparison (well, maybe German during an opera still qualifies). Two voices in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French - perfect duets. Often, during a protracted sketching project, I'll put on foreign language podcasts, just for the sense of the rhythm of the human voice, like a song that has a melody that comes in and out of one's consciousness. When it's French, it doesn't always work, because I know just enough to embarrass myself in Quebec, and some phrases pop out and break the subconscious effect.

So when ASIFA Central International Correspondent Vivi Markatos engaged with Xrista Kritkkou on youtube, I didn't really have a clue what they were talking about, but they were quite interested in the topic, and were frequently chatting back and forth with a level of musical excitement akin to a Gilbert and Sullivan patter song. I enjoyed the operetta rhythm and then - *broccoli!* The word *broccoli* emerged. In Greek, ìðñûêïëï . So now I had to pay attention. They were talking about nutrition for children, and how to get them to eat broccoli, and how it looks like little trees. So, in addition to being a phenomenon in the children's publishing world, an animator, a storyboarder, and a podcaster, Vivi is a nutritionist! Our members have no limit to their talents.

Viva Vivi!

Dr. Daisy Du to YOU!

Techno-Nationalism and the Rise of Chinese Animation: Nezha 2 and the Evolution of CGI Blockbusters in China

Online Conference March 26, 2025 11:00 AM (EST)
Free Registration in association with the University of Minnesota
https://umn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_t2pQEHCQR1SdUogWPIjh5g#/registration

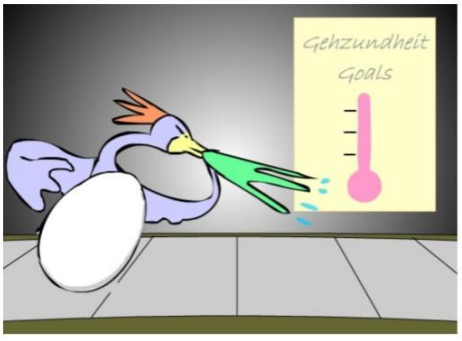
3D CGI (computer-generated imagery) animation has long been regarded as an American innovation, pioneered by Pixar's groundbreaking animated feature film, *Toy Story* (1995). For Chinese animators, mastering 3D CGI technology—a more complex and technically demanding medium compared to 2D animation—has represented an important step in advancing the country's animation industry.

The journey began with the release of China's first 3D CGI animated feature film, *Little Tiger Banban* (2001), and progressed through technological milestones such as *Thru the Moebius Strip* (2004), marking the gradual maturation of Chinese 3D CGI animation. However, it was not until the release of blockbusters like *Monkey King: Hero is Back* (2015) and *Nezha* (2019) that Chinese CGI technology began to achieve significant commercial success domestically. The recent global acclaim for *Nezha 2* (2025), with its stunning visual effects proudly touted as "made in China," has sparked a sense of national cultural achievement.

This program is part of China Center's "Considering China Webinar Series," exploring important topics related to China's many facets with the local community.

2006's "Avian Flu" PSA Revived for RIFF

The moral - throw nothing out!



Yr hmbl typst has made no secret of his affection for the Rochester (New York) International Film Festival over the past year. Their generous hospitality makes any participating filmmaker feel welcome, and the innovations at the RIT campus certainly provide its students with the best of tech and production processes available. And they provide copious notes on every film submitted. *Seule Tod* was not to their liking this time, but the short film *Avian Flu* from 2006 caught their interest. It was originally produced to show new animation students in Battle Creek (Michigan) what could be done in a "raster" form using Flash 5.5 (the school was on a tight budget), with the assignment of symbol use and synchronization to public domain music. When it was selected, yr hmbl typst realized the master was on a gen-lock transfer to a VHS format. What took barely a weekend in 2006 took nearly two weeks to properly convert the 1120 frames into a compatible mp4 for projection.

Addressing the Challenge of Afro-hair in Animation

(reflecting an NPR broadcast of 16 March 2025)

NPR's Ayesha Rascoe spoke with video game designer and UC Santa Cruz professor A.M. Darke, about her work on a new computer algorithm that more accurately illustrates Black hair for animation and video gaming.

Dr. A M Darke

https://www.nprillinois.org/2025-03-16/an-animation-breakthrough-makes-it-possible-to-more-accurately-illustrates-black-hair

Dr. Darke built her character algorithm on Afro-hair based on three follicular attributes:
1. Phase - the locking "spongy matrix" aspect
2. Switchback - the "secret sauce" - think in terms of an old telephone curled cord with a kink
3. Period skipping - the "frizz factor"

She made the point that animation has only been cataloging the Afro-hair styles for computer character images over the past five years, slowly moving past visual cliches and stereotypical designs.

Access to her library of images - https://prettydarke.cool/portfolio/open-source-afro-hair-library/

Just In! ASIFA International 65th Anniversary Collaborative on Vimeo

"The international Animation Association, ASIFA, celebrates their 65th Anniversary this year. Promotional animations from ASIFA Hellas, based on the logo designed by Alkastis Tsikou, working with Professor Anastasia Dimitra. More from Animation Workshop Group. Also, Spiritus Mundi designed by Briana Yarhouse (an IAD initiative), Jim Middleton, and so many others!

"We are a collaborative group of animators who share our vision of global communication and peace. And our love of animation.

"Music from Dan Rickabus and others. Edited by Deanna Morse and Suzanne Zack."

https://vimeo.com/1066004502

And Now, a Moment from Chuck Wilson's Bountiful Blog

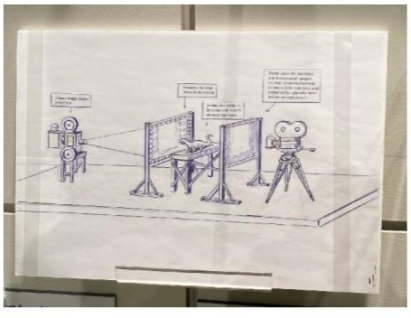
Animated Events: Ray Harryhausen in Kalamazoo

(February 1 - April 27, 2025)

https://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com/2025/03/animated-events-ray-harryhausen-in.html

I gotta say, I know some great people. My friend Oren sent me a message on Facebook about an event in Kalamazoo that slipped under my radar. At the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, they brought in a special exhibit on Ray Harryhausen.

This production was a collection of movie posters from films he worked on as well as notes, storyboards, drawings, sculptures, and models he had produced over the course of his career.



I especially liked this one, where it diagrammed out his Dynamation process. Would've loved to have some of these drawings on hand when I explained Dynamation to my students in previous classes.

Now, the exhibit runs until the end of April--April 27th to be exact. So you've still got time to get down there and take in the sights. Best of all: entry into the museum (and the exhibit) is free! Though they do take donations at the front desk if you'd like to help support their efforts to bring cool stuff like this to the people of Michigan. The display cases were filled with treasures from my childhood memories, however, some of them were more recent memories: like these skeletons from Jason and the Argonauts. Every year, I show the skeleton battle from that film to my students. I never would've thought that I'd get the chance to see them first hand.

Skeleton Models from *Jason and the Argonauts* and *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*

They also had another sketch of how the Dynamation process worked. I'm planning on integrating these photos into my class. A lot of my students struggle with understanding how Dynamation worked--especially the use of mattes. Every extra thing I can do to help them learn... I think I might use these drawings to make a scale model of Harryhausen's setup that the kids can look at.

Creating the Homunculus - Key Drawing The Golden Voyage of Sinbad, c.1971

Wow, seeing the Homunculus was such a good experience. I vividly remember watching the Golden Voyage of Sinbad on cable television back in the late '70's when I was a kid who loved to draw dinosaurs and monsters.

Model of the Homunculus The Golden Voyage of Sinbad, c.1972

Unfortunately it highlighted a weakness in my DVD collection. I've got some films like *Beast from 20,000 Fathoms, Jason and the Argonauts, Valley of Gwangi*, and *7th Voyage of Sinbad*, but I'm missing the rest of the Sinbad trilogy and classics like *Mysterious Island* and *Clash of the Titans*. Going to fix that soon.

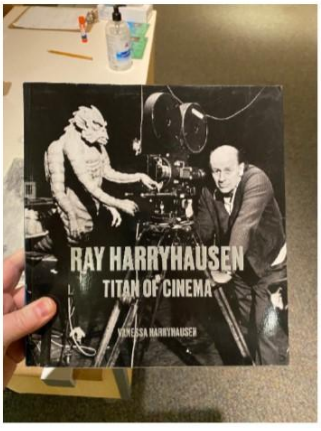
Fortunately, Amazon has a good Harryhausen film collection on Blu-Ray and *Clash of the Titans* is affordably priced. Gives me something to save up for. Maybe by Memorial Day I'll do a Saturday "Creature Feature" marathon where I binge watch all three *Sinbad films, Mysterious Island,* and *Clash of the Titans...*

Speaking of which, initially, I was a little surprised at the scale of some of these models. The Kraken was about the size of a small cat. But it makes sense. I once talked to stop-motion animator Tom Brierton about animating the robot models for Robot Jox and he said that the models were so big that it took him and several assistants to accurately move it from position to position. Now that I've had time to mull it over, it makes a lot of sense--finding that balance between the sets being too big and expensive to be practical and yet still having a model that is easier to manipulate. There's a lot to ponder and learn here.

Model of the Kraken
Clash of the Titans, c.1980

If you do end up attending the exhibit, take a moment to look at the book that Ray's daughter, Vanessa, published. It's a thick, coffee table-size book filled to the brim with stories about Ray and photos of Vanessa's favorite items from the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation's collection--many of which were on display.

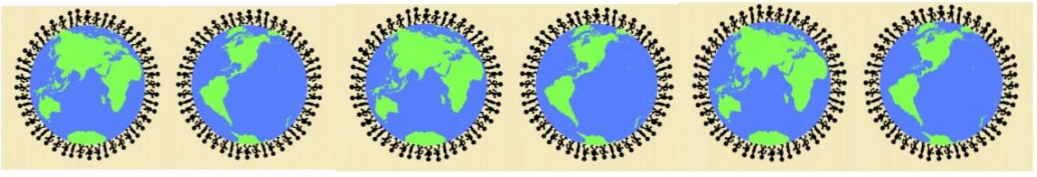
After perusing the book at the museum, I had to have a copy for my personal library, so I snagged one of the last ones on Amazon. Have already done a little digging into some of my favorite films but plan to do a deep dive into the tome before going back to Kalamazoo. This exhibit is worth multiple visits.



Hare and Fox Puppet Heads Fairy Tales (The Tortoise and the Hare), c.1958

While I took tons of photographs during my trip, I really just want to share enough to whet your appetite. You really need to see this exhibit in person. Ray Harryhausen was one of those giants upon whose shoulders modern stop motion animators stand--and a lot of 3d CGI animators as well. The legacy he left behind is well worth serious study for any student who wants to become an animator.

THE DOODLE GRAVURE DEPT.



ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) March 2025, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Make sure to check our Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - and be sure to check out the Facebook page - ANIZOOMATION - https://www.facebook.com/groups/342482260109209/

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or zoetrope camera settings that actually work, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for his dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos. Make that threes.

Psst! Free-Range Board Member *Deanna Morse (Madame President to All ASIFAnians!) has a new web-site: deannamorse.com*

LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND
LITTLE NEMO WAS JUST BEING PREPARED FOR ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO REACH THE PALACE WHERE THE PRINCESS WAS SO ANXIOUSLY AWAITING HIM. THE HORRID COSTUME, WHICH WAS PROCURED FROM FLIP FOR HIM, WAS BEING DOFFED FOR SOMETHING PRETTIER, WHEN A QUEER LOOKING OBJECT APPEARED AND MADE AN ANNOUNCEMENT. WHILE SOME DOUBT EXISTED AS TO THE TRUTH OF THE GLAD NEWS, NEMO AND HIS TRUE BLUE COMPANIONS DARED NOT TAKE ANY CHANCE, AND IN A VERY FEW MINUTES NEMO WAS RESPLENDENT
YES, YOU BE IT. TELL 'EM DE PRINCESS IS HERE
WE'LL BE DE PRINCESS, CHE YOU GO!
GWAN! YOU GO TELL 'EM
I'LL TELL 'EM DE PRINCESS IS HERE, EH!
IN GOLD LACE PUMPS, VELVET AND SPANGLES, THREE FOOTKILLERS ATTENDED HIM AND STRAIGHTWAY DEPARTED TO SEE AT HIS ONE THOUGHT WAS TO RECEIVE HIM. IT WAS EASY FOR THEM TO SEE SUCH AN EARNEST LITTLE FELLOW BUT NOT HALF AS CRUEL AS THE FOOTKILLERS WOULD HAVE BEEN HAD NOT NEMO FORGIVEN THEM. THE SITUATION WAS A SAD ONE FOR ALL CONCERNED, SOBBING AS THOUGH HIS HEART WOULD BREAK, NEMO AWOKE HIS PAPA WHO AROUSED HIM, WITH VERY PALE ADO
1
WHAT?!
DEYS A LOIDY OUTSIDE WAT SEZ SHE IS DE PRINCESS AND WANTS TO SEE NEMO RIGHT AWAY
2
SHE MUST HAVE GOT TIRED A-WAITING, NEMO.
YES, SHE'S SO ANXIOUS TO MEET YOU. THAT'S IT, SURE!
SHE'S A LITTLE LOIDY, TOO!
3
OH! NEMO AREN'T YOU HAPPY NOW
YOU MUST LOOK JUST SO, NEMO!
SHE SED SHE IS IN A HURRY WAITIN' SHE TOLE ME TO TELL YOU SO. HONEST YES!
4
FUNNY SHE'D NOT COME WITH HER ROYAL SISTER
GOOD LUCK! TO YOU, GIVE HER MY REGARDS, NEMO
ACT YOUR AGE, SLY OH NEMO I'M SO GLAD AT LAST
5
APE RILE FOOL
6
SOAK 'EM! SWAT 'EM!
7
OH! WHAT A PITY! POOR NEMO, HAS SO MISBRAGED
LOOK AT THOSE APES FOOLS BEG FORGIVENESS
OH! FORGIVE NEMO
PLEASE FORGIVE MUH!
LET NEVER DO IT AGAIN
JUST THIS ONCE
COPYRIGHT, 1906, BY THE NEW YORK HERALD CO.
8
WHAT AKE BAWLING FOR, SON? DREAMING AGAIN, EH? GO TO SLEEP!

ASIFA Central

End of August *"IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!"* MMXXV (2025)

The ASIFA Central Board

Volunteers all, gleefully promoting the best of all possible worlds while attending to their gardens:

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, Incidental Doodling, and Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

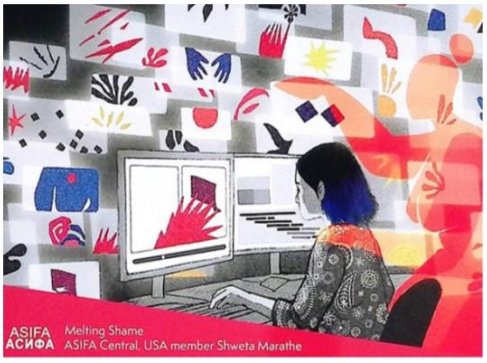
ZOOM Coffee Host
Michael Long

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President for All ASIFArians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
The Indestructible Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

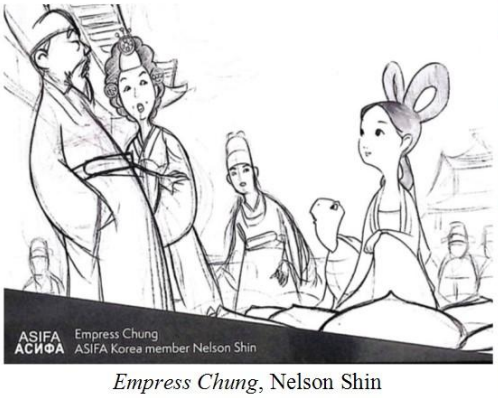
International Correspondents
Vivi Markatos
Schweta Marathe

ASIFA INTERNATIONAL POSTCARDS - 2025

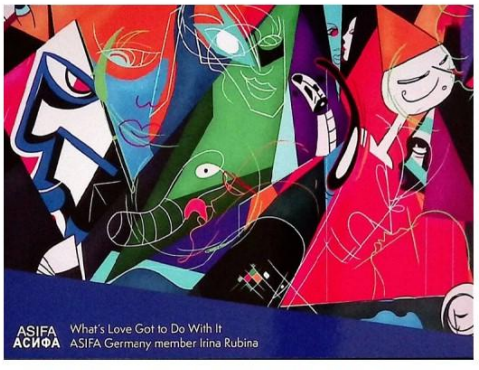
Four more in the ASIFA International postcard series were just released for 2025, and will be appearing at festivals around the world as International Animation Day approaches. Watch our for lost Michiganders lurking around the upcoming OIAF in September! Uh-oh! *Two from ASIFA Central this year!*



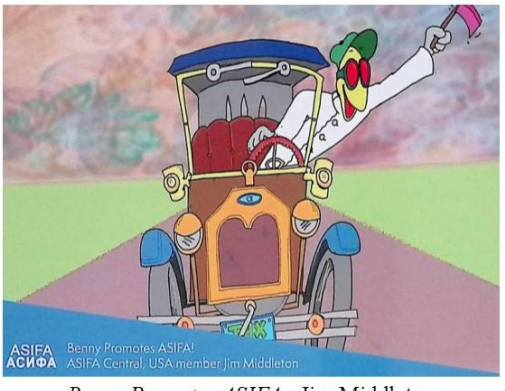
Melting Shame, Shweta Marathe



Empress Chung, Nelson Shin



What's Love Got to Do With It, Irina Rubina



Benny Promotes ASIFA , Jim Middleton

And, speaking of International Animation Day - your contribution to the ASIFA Showreels has an October 1 deadline on Film Freeway. The details are online and in this newsletter - along with an email coming to a digital mailbox near YOU! You have been Warned! CARTOONS ARE COMING!

International Animation Day - How You May Participate
(this may seem somewhat familiar)
Deadline for Submissions: October 1, 2025

The IAD program is coordinated through the online festival broker, Film Freeway. It's free, but it is a multi-step process. If your intended film is already in Film Freeway, skip to Part Three below.

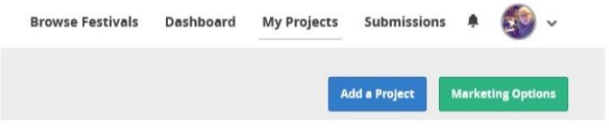
Note - and this is important to understand - *this is not a festival.* ASIFA is using FilmFreeway as a holding zone for films that chapter members want to make available for showing as part of the IAD celebration. *No prizes are awarded, and no laurels are "official" for ASIFA IAD.* Chapter representatives will pick among the submissions, and on IAD, will run them as part of that area's contribution to the international celebration!

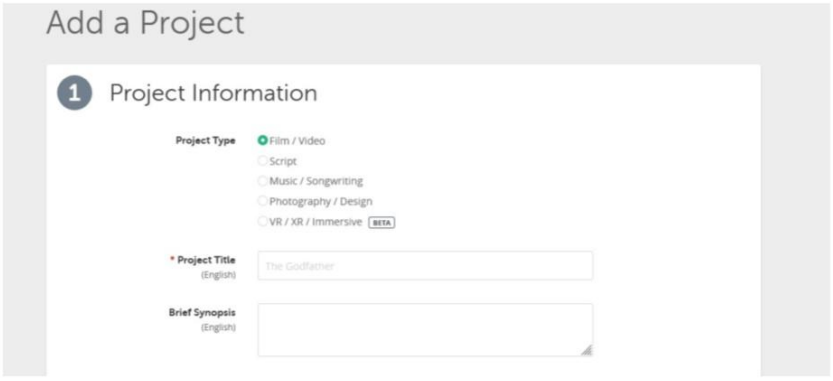
PART ONE - Some basic requirements and Guidelines
Get your animation into a digital format (ie, mp4). This will make it possible to assemble IAD entries into a compatible program.

Here are the suggested criteria from the IAD Coordinator, Bri Yarhouse:

Film dimensions should range in size from: 1280x720 to 1920x1080
Use NTSC format
Video Compression: H264
Pixel Ratio: Square Pixels
Try to keep the file size to 10 gigs or lower

PART TWO - Putting your masterpiece into the FilmFreeway portal if you haven't yet used FilmFreeway
1. Go to https://filmfreeway.com and create a profile for yourself, if you haven't already done so (if you have a profile, log in!)
2. While in the same portal, create a profile about your project. To do this, look at the top of your newly created profile page for *My Projects* and click there.
3. Then click on a blue button *Add A Project* (just like in the picture here!)





4. This opens up a series of sub categories - project info, then submissions info, then credits - fill up as many of the 5 fields as you can

5. THEN you get to upload your project file - the portal will take you to a new page and permit up to a 10G sized file (this is why we suggest a 10G file maximum!)

6. Repeat the process *for each film* you want to put into the Film Freeway library. No restriction on the number of submissions into the IAD collection!

OK, now you're done with the file building in Film Freeway.

PART THREE: Contact the ASIFA Central Secretary, yr hmbl typst, Jim Middleton at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com for your entry code information!

If you entered a film in last year's IAD, the process will be identical, nevertheless, it is only being distributed on a person-by-person basis to keep extraneous activity from occurring!

It's easier than shaving with a mask on!

And then in October, you can be an INTERNATIONAL STAR!

The ASIFA Central Reel Available should be available by October 10, with multiple formats (anticipated reels to include - Peace Centric, Family Friendly, 45 minute in-class version, 90 minute broadcast versions - so many choices!)

ASIFA Central Members - If you are coordinating showreels for your class, contact Jim Middleton at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com

*ASIFA CENTRAL Coffees - June-July-August – Featuring Michael Long's **Eastward Ha!** And Several Froggy Evening Experiences*

June Coffee Notes and Incredible linkages!

https://youtu.be/i_5Cn1aMIO8?si=qkW06a_Pe1pIbTp4 - Eric Miranda's *Coffee Break* from Webster University

June 5th ASIFA-Central Coffee break: talked about the new Apple Procreate software (20 bucks) geared more for animation, with some sophisticated features for the price. No Windows applications available yet (still). Lots of teasing information here: https://procreate.com/dreams With this animated short demonstrating what can be done with the platform: https://youtu.be/VJKEhmQoKGw?si=dwtWQR4ZysJOTQBH

A Magnificent Life from the Cannes Film Festival (2025) by Sylvain Chomet (*Triplets of Belleville*)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeA_z_SCHig - his style is strikingly recognizable

The Gang in June! - John Akre - Michael Long - Brad Uyeda- Chris Sagovac- Vivi Markatos - David Thrasher - Deanna Morse

Mutant Aliens, the latest feature from Bill Plympton has its trailer out at https://youtu.be/j0XHdTGBHVs?si=Oiyr3kSJQ1nkfjLn

Vivi saw Bambi Meets Godzilla for the first time. Her eyes are fully opened!! https://youtu.be/5R-rbzcEM8A?si=gpbUpc_AnfVLQw4w

Vivi shared images from a new book she finished—children's book age 9-11. She has created over 150 books now in preparation for a book fair in her Greek homeland.

Vivi animating in peace, on peace

Twice Upon a Time is being restored from 1982, a LucasFilm under-seen feature https://youtu.be/pqCRgiHHvB4?si=abRSn7-vfFzGO72X ttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqCRgiHHvB4

July Coffee - Flip Book Celebration and STUFF!

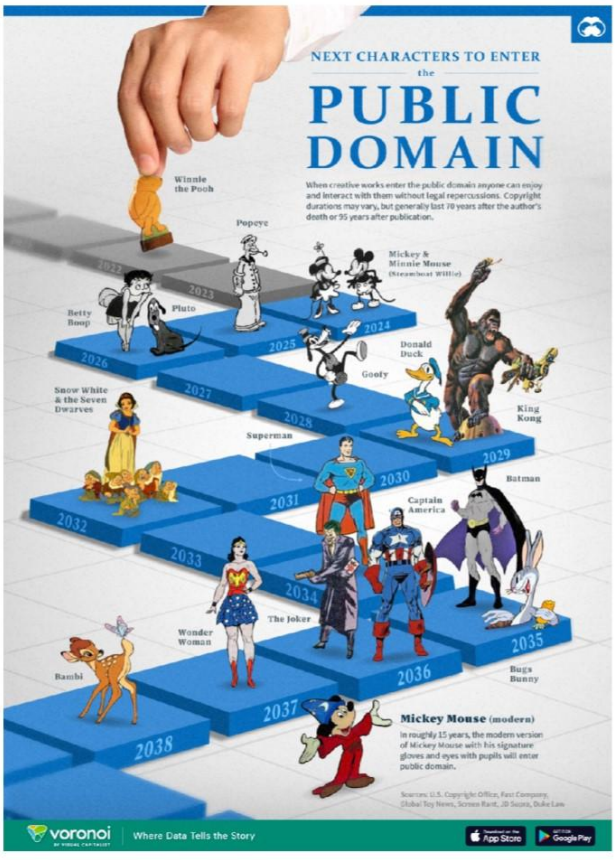
The Flipbook Film Festival is an annual event in Vienna that focuses on animated films made by European authors. It features screenings, exhibitions, master classes, workshops, panels, and meetings with film makers. The festival also includes animated music videos and a European panorama section. In addition to the Flipbook Film Festival, there is also *FLIPT!* 2024 - The 4th Austrian flipbook festival, organized by Gold Extra, open to all experimental flipbook submissions.

Agnes Li provided the address and link information - the 20 September 2025 deadline is tight for this year's competition, but it will likely be a returned experience in 2026 - https://daumenkino.animaplus.at/en/intro - in addition to the flip book, you'll need an entry form and if you want it returned (sending single originals might not be the best idea, they will all get well-loved during the run of the festival) include an envelope with return postage (but again, the current international "challenges" in shipping to and from Europe may have an impact on whether things make it to the US – similar challenges are facing shipping material from Canada to the US as of 27 August 2025, due to near-daily capricious practices affecting international shipping). The mailing address also follows here, to document the info for our newsletter and ASIFA Central archives (again, thanks to Agnes Li for her contributions during the July Zoom)

All basic information for Flipt! is at stoptrik.com.

FLIPT!
Pekarna Magdalenske mreže
Ob železnici 8
2000 Maribor, Slowenien

Orrin Scott discovered that the Internet Archive has John Halas' *Timing for Animation* in digital form: https://archive.org/details/timingforanimation/mode/2up
Orrin also has added animation periodicals and a lecture for Winsor McCay's 150th birthday on his International Archive account, linked here: https://archive.org/details/@orrin_scott382 - AND he tracked down information on upcoming public domain character information - https://www.visualcapitalist.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The-Next-Characters-to-Go-Public-Domain-With-Footer.jpg
(Betty Boop and Pluto slide into that world in 2026)



With peace being a "consummation devoutly to be wished" this year, we received word about a global anijam, in addition to the project being coordinated by ASIFA Central's Bri Yarhouse, organized by Joanna Quinn, Called *To Gaza with Love*. There was a short deadline for it, with the submissions via an eventbrite feed (deadline currently passed): https://www.eventbrite.com/e/to-gaza-with-love-a-global-anijam-tickets-1375236813329

Michael Long, yr hmbl typst, Dave Thrasher, Deanna Morse,Orrin Scott, Johan and Beth Akre, Agnes Li, Jane Flint, Vivi Markatos

At last count (15 August), over 350 animators from 50 countries had contributed to the Gaza anijam. It will be a major subject this year, no doubt (*yr hmbl typst* will be taking copious notes at the OIAF in September for related topics).
From the *To Gaza with Love* coordinators came this follow up note: The premiere of the final animation submissions will live streamed on an interactive map indicating the location of support. (TBA) A curated compilation of submitted animations will also be screened at select International Animation Festivals, bringing messages of unity from around the world. Check @ac4Pal on instagram.

A phenomenally influential animated series hosted by Jean Marsh on PBS in the 1970s has at least one episode popping up on YouTube as well - this is a link to episode 108 from the *International Animation Festival* in 1975 – https://youtu.be/CasJBQDekL0?si=zdDzNg8nNqK8R_ZG

David Thrasher tracked down the Python alumnus Terry Gilliam teaching his cut out animation style, also on the ubiquitous YouTube: https://youtu.be/KOqcHCEqO1k?si=vGX2UPIt3Iiu-24F

August Coffee Zoom – More Links and Mark Twain

Ink and Drink Comics - it's even on the Book of Faces!
https://www.facebook.com/inkanddrinkcomics/

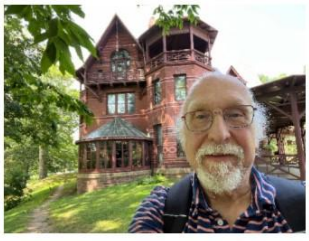
And following Michael Long's successful roadtrip to seek out Mark Twain, we were treated to this bit of visual ephemera
https://marktwainhouse.org/

David Thrasher, goofball in Hawaiian shirt, John and Beth Akre, Peaches Walczak, Agnes Li, Chris Sagovac, VIVI!, Michael Long, Orrin Scott

Travel Notes from Our On-The-Roadtrip Reporter, Michael Long!

In Elmira, NY, there's a wooden octagonal writing study that Mark Twain's sister-in-law had built for him, so he could write, away from the house, and look over Elmira and the river. (She also didn't want him smoking his 30-40 cigars all day in the main house.) For 20 summers he wrote in that study, working on *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn*, among other things. In 1952 the study was removed from its hillside spot and relocated on the campus of Elmira College, where you can visit it for free today.

Hal Roach and Mark Twain are both buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Elmira. Sam Clemens's wife Livy and all their children are buried there, too (as are a lot of Confederate soldiers who languished and died in a notorious Civil War prison camp near the town). I visited the cemetery and the study on Friday July 18th. Before leaving for the trip, I selected two stones from St. Louis to leave on MT's gravestone. The rough stone represents Sam Clemens, the rough, western humorist, and the polished stone is more like Mark Twain, who cleaned up his act and character (with the help of his wife) for public display.



On July 28th I visited the Mark Twain home in Hartford, Connecticut. In the museum they had an exhibit of the prosthetic noses that Hal Holbrook used to portray (embody?) Mark Twain. Pretty cool stuff! There's a lot at the museum and house to see.

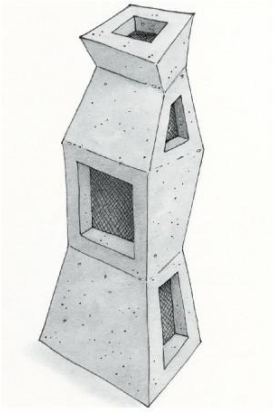
With a few more road-trip photos and notes documenting the *Jumping Frog From St. Louis County*.

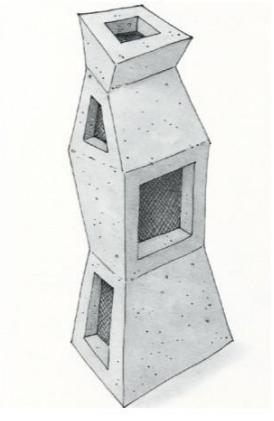
Background: my great uncle, Phil Giebel, worked for the Winkle Terra Cotta Company in St. Louis, Missouri. The company created terra cotta figures and designs to adorn public buildings throughout St Louis and the Midwest. Phil created two of these frogs around 100 years ago, perhaps as wedding presents for my grandfather (his brother), married in 1926. The frogs sat in my grandfather's backyard, facing each other across the lawn, and when my mother was a little girl in the

1930s, she used to "ride" them – as did my brother and I and our cousins when we were little. The frogs were there for over 60 years.

When my grandmother died in 1988, the frog pair was split up: one went to my mother, the other to her brother (that one is now lost). The surviving frog ("Froggy") sat in my parents' backyard for another 37 years; again, in all kinds of weather, slowly sinking further and further into the soil. So, for about 100 years, this frog has been outdoors in rain, snow, and heat (Maybe it helped scare away flies?). It's very heavy, made of concrete (we think), painted and glazed. That's why I hired two strong teenagers to carry it from the backyard to the driveway and lift it into the car.

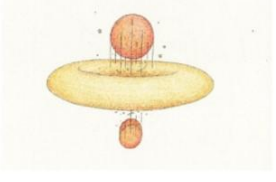
In that car it "hopped" to Vermont by way of Kent, Ohio, and Elmira, New York. Now, Froggy is with my niece's family in Burlington, carrying on the family tradition of keeping an eye on the landscaping. Mark Twain would have appreciated the effort, I think. I'm only sorry he didn't get a chance to meet him in person.





My grandfather was the one who introduced my brother and me to Mark Twain and Hannibal. In summer 1965, during a blistering heat wave, Grandpa spontaneously offered to drive our family of four in his nice, new AIR CONDITIONED car to Hannibal, Missouri. Once there, we toured the house, and then the Becky Thatcher Gift Shop, across the street. He told my brother and me that we could pick out *one item,* and he would buy it for us. I picked a little metal paperweight bust of Mark Twain which had been "made in Japan." I still have it. When my grandfather died the next year, I asked my grandmother if I could have my grandfather's book of the collected short stories of Mark Twain. She said yes. I still have that, too. Thus began a-lifelong association with Twain.

Now, how can I think of going back to teaching this fall, with all this recent travel to relive?



Deanna Morse, Annecy, and THE WORLD!

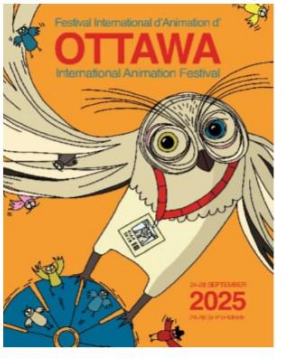
Deanna Morse at Zagreb with Anastasia Dmitra - ASIFA International Quick Notes

ASIFA General Assembly at Animafest, Zagreb, June 5, 2025

At the ASIFA General Assembly members gathered for a concise yet meaningful meeting, supported by over 380 proxies from global chapters. The audit was formally accepted. Ten chapters shared dynamic updates: from ASIFA South and Central USA's vibrant community efforts, to Hungary's rich programming, Croatia's IAD revival, and Japan's new leadership. Austria and Hellas emphasized institutional partnerships and future goals. East USA celebrated festival milestones, while China showcased growth and structural evolution. Korea raised urgent concerns about AI's impact on animation education and proposed global collaboration. The assembly concluded with distribution of the 2025–2027 nomination timeline and informal conversations about ASIFA's future.

And, as ASIFA Central celebrates its 50th year, Deanna has been circumnavigating the globe as the International President, creating a positive presence and good will with the expanding presence of the association. Next - A chapter in ***Mongolia?***

OIAF Update - Still With A Special ASIFA Central Membership Discount!



The Ottawa International Animation Festival announces its 2025 Feature Film and Short Film jury members, including Canadian animators Winston Hacking and Chris Lavis.

The OIAF is one of the world's leading animation events, and it has provided screenings, exhibits, workshops, and entertainment since 1976, bringing together art and industry to experience world-class animated works. This year's OIAF runs from September 24 to September 28. Visit the OIAF site, *www.animationfestival.ca* for more information.

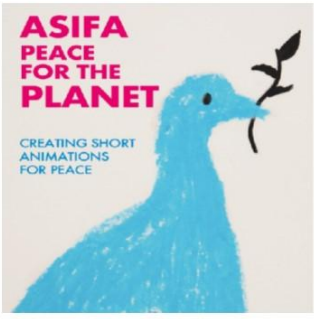
The ASIFA Central AnimaPass Discount is $20 for ASIFA Central members. The festival has been provided with active members from ASIFA Central, and active members have received a separate email with the discount code for the festival. If you haven't received that email, or if you encounter any membership documentation problems when ordering your AnimaPass, contact yr hmbl typst (jim.middletonrx@gmail.com) and we'll work with the OIAF to adjust their database.

This year's OIAF will feature 72 animated short film finalists amid a record-breaking 2,850 Submissions. All winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony on September 27 at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

"International animation continues to surprise," says Chris Robinson, Artistic Director of the OIAF. "Even as the world spins through chaos, fear, and conflict, our community has turned to humour as a vibrant counterpoint. A few years ago, we introduced the Hélène Tanguay Award for Humour to shine a spotlight on the funnier side of animation—and this year's selections deliver every flavour you could hope for: sharp satire, whimsical absurdity, delightfully dark twists, and good old-fashioned slapstick."

Bri!

Bri Yarhouse's *– reminder that the Peace initiative is still on the ASIFA International website:*
https://asifa.net/asifa-peace-for-the-planet/



"This year for International Animation Day, we will be focusing on a new initiative. The goal is for animators of all ages, all levels, to be able to use the power of their art towards speaking out against the use of hate and killing to solve our differences. The AWG (Animators Workshop Group) will also be leading children in workshops around the world on this topic.
"When I was in India at WAVES *(World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit)* in early May, speaking on this topic and handing out 1000 cards with a QR code to lead potential animators to the link at asifa.net. If you are interested in the files to print up locally, let me know (easier than trying to print and ship from the US!).

"Some of you reached out in early January and indicated your interest in helping guide and support IAD. I will be holding a zoom meeting soon. If you are interested in being part of the meeting let me know and we will work on scheduling it.

"Finally, I have the honor of having been asked to lead AWG as president after Christel Degros has stepped down from the position. I am excited to continue to think about ways that animation can touch lives and make a difference. It is a world that needs to be reminded that we are all worthy of dignity and love."

Belal Koraz teaching art and animation to students in Gaza

Briana.yarhouse@interlochen.org
https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=2122837)

Jim Middleton and Gary Schwartz Up To Their Old Tricks - Gary's Had Better Food!

Gary Schwartz stepped into the strange during July's "Something's Not Quite Right," an outdoor experimental film screening hosted by the Pink Flamingo in Detroit. Curated for the curious, these short films conjured eerie atmospheres, otherworldly imagery, and disjointed realities that linger long after they flicker out.
The eight short films ran on a loop for approximately 17 minutes during the program - and the Pink Flamingo served delicious food throughout the event. All found themselves entranced, disturbed, or somewhere in between. Nothing here was quite what it seemed.

Jim Middleton, yr hmbl typst, worked with Dr. Phil Bellfy of Ziibi Press in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan to do spot illustrations and the cover design for his revised edition of the book, *Indians and Other Misnomers*, set for release later in 2025. Dr. Bellfy is an enrolled member of the White Earth Band of Minnesota Chippewa, Co-Director of the Center for the Study of Indigenous Border Issues (CSIBI), and Professor Emeritus of American Indian Studies, Michigan State University. Evolution of the sketches is on Jim's blog at
https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com/2025/06/post-754-another-ever-evolving-ongoing.html

The Official Rotogravure - ASIFA & The WORLD

Going Bananas!! - with Kim Roberts in Argentina

Deanna Morse and the Gang in Annecy 2025

To the Victor Goes the BANANA!

Zagreb 2025

ASIFA Promo Film Zagreb - 2025

Work in Progress - August Coffee John Akre

Deanna honored in Annecy - 2025

ASIFA Central Website Stats 2025

	May	*June*	*July*
Visitors	140	192	182
Views	263	309	254
Main Page	150	213	172
Newsletter	64	23	25
"About"	11	22	12

ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) End-of-Spring 2025, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements ***and an ever expanding newsletter archive*** *for ASIFA Central at -* https://asifa.org

ANIMATION UNITES US

ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Make sure to check our Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/

ANIMATION UNITES US

And then dive into more digital fun at https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral
and for ASIFA International - https://asifa.net - and be sure to check out the Facebook page - ANIZOOMATION - https://www.facebook.com/groups/342482260109209/

ANIMATION UNITES US

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or zoetrope camera settings that actually work, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for his dull bloggery, https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos. Make that threes.

Psst! Free-Range Board Member *Deanna Morse (Madame President to All ASIFAnians!) has a new web-site: deannamorse.com*

A Note Excerpted from the ASIFA-SF Newsletter, September 2025

(yr hmbl typst)

"The AI craze again demonstrates how misused any new technology is - movies created Sound and Color - and Paramount created *Follow Through!* in 1930. MGM was the king of musicals, and they extruded *DuBarry Was A Lady* as if they forgot everything in a hurry to distract us from WWII. Ernie Kovacs was the only one who understood the creative use of video in the 1950s, when it was deemed an cheaper way to make re-broadcasts than kinescopes, and early computer animation was served out in the longest, most tedious, 90 second specimens until *Andre and Wally B.*

"The AI I see most effective is as just another "special effect" and a much of that is frankly, making deeper use of existing, often-free, gaming software (a *game* changer, as *Flow* proved this year). But if the audience isn't educated well enough, if the intent is to deceive, well, AI can certainly help destroy faith and credibility in whatever we think we are seeing.

"A solution? Learn cursive, write letters, take actual notes, and get a good night's sleep. Creativity needs to start early, use both halves of the brain, and have a well rested imagination equipped with critical thinking."

LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND
THIS IS THE WORST TOWN I WAS EVER IN! EVERYTHING IS A WRECK!
TAKE THIS WONDERFUL WAND! WITH IT YOUR WISHES WILL COME TO A REALITY! TAKE IT!
OH! I CAN WISH FOR ANYTHING WITH THIS AND GET MY WISH!
HUH! IS THIS THE KIND OF PEOPLE THAT LIVE IN THIS AWFUL PLACE?
5
I WISH YOU DRESSED IN A HANDSOME HAT AND DRESS
WHO IS THAT BOY HE'S A DANDY SIR!
6
I WISH YOU DRESSED IN CLEAN, CLOTHES
UM! WHO IS THAT FINE LOOKING BOY?
THIS IS FUN! I WISH YOU JUST WHAT YOU WISH FOR!
WHO IS THAT TALKING?
IT'S A STRANGE BEAUTIFUL BOY!
8
OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE!
OH! OH! OH! I CAN SEE! HOW GRAND EVERYTHING IS? OH! OH!
HUH! HE'S MADE THAT BLIND GIRL SEE! I'LL BE JIGGED!
WHO IS THAT BOY?
OH! HE'S WONDERFUL!
OH! I HAVE A NEW FOOT! YE! HEE! YE GOOD-BYE, CRUTCHES!
I WISH YOU TWO PERFECT FEET. THROW AWAY YOUR CRUTCHES
LOOK! HE HAS CURED CRIPP!
WHO IS IT?
WHO IS THAT BOY?
IS THAT NEMO?
IT'S NEMO!
OOOOH LET'S FOLLOW HIM!
I'M LITTLE NEMO! FOLLOW ME AND YOU'LL ALL BE HAPPY!!! I WILL TURN THIS PLACE INTO A PARADISE
TOP THAT'S NEMO
11
COME! NEMO! WAKE UP! AND I'M GOING TO APRIL FOOL YOU! COME! GET UP! IT'S LATE COME NEMO!
WINSOR McCAY
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ASIFA Central

A SPECIAL SEPTEMBER 2025 *ADDITIONAL NEWSLETTER*
YOU LUCKY READERS, YOU!

September *"IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!"* MMXXV (2025)

The Current ASIFA Central Board

President
Julie Goldstein

Vice President
Christopher Sagovac

Treasurer and International IAD Coordinator
Bri Yarhouse

Social Media Coordinator and Chapter Ambassador:
Tracy Miller-Robbins
Josh Harrell

Secretary, Yr Hmbl Typst, Incidental Doodling, and Membership Coordinator
Jim Middleton

ZOOM Coffee Host
Michael Long

With Free-Range Board Members
Deanna Morse
(Madame President for All ASIFArians!)
and
Gretchen Vinnedge
Stephen Leeper
Michael Long
The Indestructible Bob Swieringa
Charles Wilson

International Correspondents
Vivi Markatos
Schweta Marathe

Many of these positions will become available in 2026

Upcoming Mini-Retreat and ASIFA Central Board Elections Coming Doodle Polls to Enter your EMAIL

The September 3rd meeting of the ASIFA Cenral Board convened to assess the prospects for both a retreat and a general board election between now and December, 2025. The consensus was that a virtual retreat can still be arranged for October, with a general election for board members in December, with the new term kicking in on January 1, 2026. Board members have been experiencing a surfeit of scheduling challenges over the past year, and many projects have been sidelined until the *very animated dust could settle*.

Doodle Polls will be coming from President Julie Goldstein or yr hmbl typst very soon to enquire on favored dates for the retreat and make a call for interested candidates for Board Member positions.

A Quick September 2025 ZOOM Coffee Experience

Magical Zoom meetings were all the rage in the first week of September - hosted by Michael Long of Webster University, the first topic for consideration was that Webster University would no longer be using Zoom for its campus activities, so participants passed the hat to continue it as our most effective means so far for group communications.

The Usual Suspects - Michael Long, Yr Hmbl Typst, Gretchen Vinnedge, Deanna Morse, David Thrasher, Peaches Wilczak, Viva Vivi!, Carlos Rosas, Chris Sullivan

AI was on the forefront of discussions, as it will become for the upcoming proposed retreat, with a discussion forum on its use in education. As with any new technology, it is being used without real planning aforethought, as computerization was implemented as a "great way to reduce staff" but in reality, only shuffled payroll to an IT department. It can be the same with AI in the animation education world, an especial pity since there is a groundswell of more hands-on techniques rather than AI, with the use of off-the-shelf open source software (Blender, etc) proving effective for individual expression - animation is not a tool-based medium, and as ASIFA members have long-contended, "We have the best *storytellers*," which is the best mental state when considering what AI involvement should entail in any animated production.

And speaking of software, Wonder Unit was explored as an open-source software for storyboarding, along with a product called Storyboarder, which offered a frank assessment of license-centric (and expensive) "commercial products" with its FAQ paragraph explaining, "Why is it free?" with a poetically terse, "F*ck those guys."

Happy Valley Film Festival Still Taking Submissions!

The Happy Valley Animation Festival (HVAF) will return for its sixth year with events beginning on March 26, 2026 at State College, PA (Happy Valley). An open international animation competition showcasing a wide variety of animated works, HVAF is screened online as well as throughout the Pennsylvania State University (University Park). Submissions from students, early career, and practicing professional artists, designers, and filmmakers are welcome in any of the three categories: *Animated Short Films, Experimental Animation,* and *Animated Motion Graphics & Design.*

Call for Entries: October 1, 2025 - December 1, 2025
Submission Deadline: December 1st, 2025

March 27, 2026 | Animation Showcase
March 26 and March 28, 2026 | Official Selection Screenings
May 1 - May 22, 2026 (tentative) | Gallery Exhibition
https://happyvalleyanimationfestival.org

Steve Leeper at CMU - Presenting Works in Progress and Author Installations

Central Michigan University
University Art Gallery Schedule 2025-2026
Hours: Monday – Friday 11–6, Saturday 11–3
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/cmichartgallery

Department of Art and Design Faculty Exhibition 2025
August 29 - September 27, 2025
Opening reception Thursday, August 28, 2025, 4-6 pm

And Another Reminder – IAD Submission Deadline on FilmFreeway is October 1, 2025!!!

Analytical and Articulatory Animation Analysis

ASIFA Central Newsletter Supplemental Series - January 2026

Panel Discussion and Creative Perspectives Regarding AI - from November Retreat 2025

Video edit - 55 minutes - at https://vimeo.com/1149263861/10499da2d1?fl=ip&fe=ec

Disucssions by Bri Yarhouse - Julie Goldstein - Steve Leeper - Carlos Rosas

Edit and Notes: Jim Middleton

The AI discussion was framed around a critical distinction – AI as generator (enabling) versus AI as tool (empowering). When used as a generator, AI systems gather enormous amounts of data to produce images, voices, and styles, often without the consent of the artists whose work was absorbed in the process. When positioned as a tool, however, AI can function much like earlier technologies in animation history by supporting an artist's vision, reducing repetitive labor, and extending creative possibilities without replacing authorship.

One of the most animated and thoughtful conversations at this year's AI Retreat centered not on software demonstrations, but on a deeper question: What does artificial intelligence mean for artists and the future of animation?

Uses of Generative AI - Bri Yarhouse and Julie Goldstein introduced the discussion

Bri Yarhouse, Interlochen

Bri Yarhouse began with a presentation she gave in China this past October, based on AI discussions held in Pasadena, California that were conducted by Lightbox the previous month. Her presentation was more about protecting the artist from the uncredited absorption of work by AI, rather than the techniques and tools for using artificial intelligence.

Julie Goldstein, GVSU

Julie Goldstein has been working with AI for the past year as a means of creation. Based on carefully worded prompts and specific directions, she built visual sculptures in a way that reflected her existing established styles, and then created the foundation for a consciousness. Adding a backstory, her digitally created sculptures could respond to questions on their thoughts and feelings.

Her discussions at a workshop at Aquinas became less a presentation of her work in progress and more of a conversation about the tools and how they can be used to (literally) mold her vision. She has been involved in a series of community presentations since then, talking with a range of different people on the subject, not all of them necessarily artists.

Said Julie, "It is not infringing on anybody's copyrights or anything like that. It's more of a way that I'm expanding on my sculpture in terms of my personal work. So I'm excited to share some contents and then some tools."

Artist protection emerged as a major concern. Recent tools such as Glaze and Nightshade were discussed as methods to actively defend their work from unauthorized AI training. Innovation does not excuse extraction.

AI as Artistic Generator vs Tool

Bri began with several thoughts regarding AI – first, a basic, rough definition of AI as an artistic generator, building creative works by aggregating large data sets for any type of artistic endeavor. This would include imitating styles of Miyazaki or Studio Ghibli, or the practice of creating deep fakes of real people without the person's consent. The challenge is protecting the artist from that kind of process.

Empowering vs Enabling: The Tool Question

So, as a tool, does AI empower the user, or does it enable? Empowering in this situation means it supports the creative process, much as having an assistant being sure you have clean brushes when you paint, or as an animator, having a cel-painter who can fill in the colors of hundreds of drawings based on your specific model sheets. In the context of enabling, the question becomes whether AI is attempting to *be* the creator for the user, and thereby generally weaken our capabilities. Bri added, "An example would be the spell-check function in word processing – does using spell-check make us better spellers?"

Discussion Panel at Lightbox Review *(https://lightboxexpo.com/)*

Three experts comprised the Lightbox Expo Panel on AI: *Ben Zao*, a professor at University of California, worked with students to create tools to protect artists' rights from AI data stripping and manipulation. The doctoral candidates of Zao's team have been developed the software *Nightshade* and *Glaze* , now available, with already 10 million international downloads.[1]

There have already been multiple cyber-attacks on Glaze. When Zao's team built Glaze, they thought to be impossible to code protection against AI, but it was ultimately created with only 18 lines of code.

Nightshade works by "flipping the script" on what AI is seeking for image representation, so if AI is reading the code for a cat image, then what it will receive through Nightshade is the code for a dog.

Zao's team is working on some other protection software, including one called *Hemlock*, which will be a music protection software. Apparently Spotify is being flooded by AI generated music files, squeezing out resources for DNA-driven composers.[2]

A software called *Harpocrates* is being explored to break deep fakes.[3]

The second contributor on this panel was *Karla Ortiz*, a rights artist, advocate, and concept artist for film and games. The Lightbox Expo, in the heart of L.A., sensed the pressure that AI is having on the creative process, with local layoffs exposing an immediate challenge.[4]

Deanna Igelsrud, a legislative and political advocate, rounded out the discussion, in her role as consultant for the concept artists association, and discussed what protective controls are in the pipeline.

The Ethics of AI and Data Usage

Adobe Firefly, with the largest stock image library in the world, still relies on Midjourney code and data points when building collage images. It gives the illusion of a thorough archive of material, but exploring the underlying code reveals concealed clues to the image source.

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[1] Nightshade: https://nightshade.cs.uchicago.edu/downloads.html Glaze: https://glaze.cs.uchicago.edu/

[2] "Nightshade" is a derivative of belladonna atropa, genus solanum, which is poisonous – but solanum is the same genera that includes tomatoes, yr hmbl typsts' favorite Reagan-era vegetable: also, hemlock, Conium maculatum, is a highly poisonous flowering plant in the family Apiaceae which includes carrots, a favorite Bug Bunny-era vegetable. Name your poison! -yrhmbltypst

[3] Harpocrates was the Ptolemaic god of silence and secrets https://harpocrates-corp.com/

[4] Lightbox Expo is already scheduled for October of 2026 - and as an interesting twist, Disney Inc. is a "silver sponsor" – the same Disney investing $1 *billion* in OpenAI

Bri added, "Furthermore, it appears that generative AI is not profitable at this point. It's a giant tech bubble that is losing money." Recently, an out-of-court settlement ($1.5 *billion*) was agreed between the AI company Anthropic and a class-action of authors and publishers. It followed claims that Anthropic used pirated books to train its AI models. [5]Court cases are being reviewed by many plaintiffs and lawyers where AI is stealing artwork, a process that goes beyond the definition in the United States for "fair use."

The Lightbox conference estimated that in three to four years the bubble will burst, as artists fight for their rights in human jobs. There will still be AI, but art students may encounter new struggles in that altered environment.

Bri's Interlochen program in Michigan was intentionally created with ample physical, under-the-camera exercises, a hopeful way to future-proof students' later work. Just as portrait painters adapted when photography came into being, emerging artists can create more than pixels on a screen.

Bri explained, "That is where abstraction, impressionism and other movements emerged. We need to push ourselves creatively to constantly look at what we can do and learn how to use these tools. Physical elements leave a footprint."

An unsettling take-away pronouncement at the Lightbox Expo was the grim statement, *"There is no such thing as ethical AI."*

Personal Storytelling

Bri noted that the enabling aspect of AI has led to a lot of lazy storytelling that happens, especially commercially. Genuine tales and characters will always resonate with audiences; never discount the opportunity to tell personal stories and truth, and avoid the generic, generative ideas from AI.

There remains a serious world-wide interest in human-created art, with a flourishing of feature films that are either hand drawn or created through stop motion. [6]

Bri offered the hope that AI can be contained, or at least curated, once the thrust for profit has eaten itself, and that educators and associations (such as ASIFA) can have a role to play in setting up guard rails and protections for current and aspiring artists.

AI as Extension of CGI

Julie Goldstein offered her path to discovery of the use of AI to empower the artist. She regarded AI as an extension of computer graphics and CGI, part of the constant flow of new tools and techniques to streamline processes. Ultimately, these are different aesthetics with different approaches to represent imagery. As an educator, he is actually experiencing a lot of refreshing push-back from her students regarding AI; they're not just accepting AI as a panacea to the creative process.

"...My feeling is that I started off with 16mm, on my Bolex, making clay animation. So to me, what I'm doing

---

[5] The settlement received preliminary court approval in September 2025. Authors affected will receive a small consideration after the dust settles from legal costs.

[6] The first *Ne Zha* film was released in 2019 and earned 5 billion yuan, the highest-grossing ever for animated films, until *Ne Zha 2* set the new record, surpassing $2.2 billion globally, and ranking among the top five highest-grossing movies of all time.

with my work [in AI] is really streamlining a process. I'm trying to stay true to my aesthetic sensibility, but I wanted, always wanted, to animate sculptures... but I've been working on a larger project, just to get the characters to come to life and talk."

Teaching Values: Tactile vs Digital

Education was another recurring theme at the Expo and Retreat discussions. Participants stressed that animation's foundation remains an embodied practice — drawing, sculpting, timing, observation, and intention. While tools will evolve, the loss of tactile learning risks eroding the very skills that define the medium. Several educators noted encouraging signs of student resistance to automation-first thinking, and a renewed interest in physical processes and handmade work.

Because the brain processes information differently with physical interactions, there needs to be an appreciation for the value of tactile involvement, and AI tools can be trained to work well when their expected outcome is an amplification - an empowerment - of the soul of the artist, *"when you have that sense of self and you have that vision, but it has to be developed."*

Julie reminded the attendees that, "the word *animation* comes from this soul, this *animus*, and it's how animators give birth, breathe life to their moving images. The *enabling* aspect of AI, the theft of the work of others, can destroy your own soul in the process. According to Julie, *"it's going to be really important for ASIFA to step up and become a leader in this dialogue, and talk about when to and when not to use these tools – and employ a real ethical consideration of these tools, not just in terms of artwork."*

When people use AI with a corporate interest at hand and intend to undercut the value of the artist, that is dangerous. Artists must step up and own the tool. But it's really hard when a lot of people are already angry at the tool.

However, there is a strong interest to embrace it, because it is an awesome tool. Just like when, the work of the elaborate multiplane camera can be emulated in the software Harmony.

The conversation also addressed environmental and cultural impacts. Large-scale AI data centers carry significant energy costs, and the proliferation of low-value, rapidly generated content was compared to junk food — easy to consume, but ultimately depleting. The panel argued for intentionality and restraint as part of any ethical creative practice.

Julie Introduces Her Work

(Bri offered an introductory observation) "...at (a recent producer) round table in China about generative AI, they don't have to hire animators. They can generate the material directly. And so they're looking for a future where they make more money and there are less animators...what I'm saying, that's coming from a corporate interest."

Julie noted, "It will be soulless. And they can let them do it. If AI wants to consume its own AI stuff and they want to do like a Bitcoin thing with it, let 'em do it. We can't stop it. But the thing is, there's a resurgence now in the tactile, there's an appreciation for a experience created by a human, and I really think that that's just a pipe dream. That is the bubble that you're talking about. That's not going to go anywhere. (People talk) .. about how movies are horrible now... they're not like they used to be. And they were talking about anime, we were talking about animation and different things. I almost feel like (AI is) going to make what we do even more valuable.

"The thing that I'm concerned about with is the idea that we can't fight back - it is not true. I believe we can fight back. And that was part of what they were talking about, is that we are not just at the mercy of the corporate world – that we can make choices, we can force their hands and we can stop these tools from abusing our art.

Julie interjected at one point, "I'm not saying anything different. I'm, I'm totally on board with you, but I think

part of fighting back is also embracing the tools and using them, showing them how they can be used." [7]

A highlight of the session was the screening of Mutable Matter, an experimental work that framed AI as an amplifying medium rather than an author. Originating in physical sculpture, the piece demonstrated how AI can be approached as a conversational collaborator — shaped through editing, direction, and human judgment — rather than a replacement for creative intent. [8]

Julie Goldstein's Creative Introspection Using AI

Julie explored her projects, process and philosophy. "We teach students how to use the body to translate how we feel, into the form, right?

"Mutable Matter was a deliberate title because it's like having a conversation with the medium. I love having conversation with clay. I got into animation by working with clay. When I would work with clay, it would like be one thing and then something else, and then something else. And then I had to make it a final sculpture 'cause it needed to be fired. But somebody said to me, *no*, that's clay animation."

"In the past (working with clay) has been transformation and evolution of form. So it's the same thing with the AI. I'm having a conversation with the medium...I'm trying to embrace it and see what it will do.

"I think of everything as energy, vibrating light, sound matter. Now we have this digital vibration. How can I use ... that medium? How can I sculpt? And I'm a sculptor. I'm not an illustrator. It's sculpture and that's why I love editing, and (working with) three dimensional forms.

"I did a whole bunch of experiments that were like cinema verite within. ... So I'm giving it prompts, I'm describing my sculptures very profusely, verbally as well, bringing images in. I'm not ...(trying to) train the AI to emulate, but I'm just having a conversation with it and being an editor, and it's kind of like working with actors, you know. There's only so much control over what it's going to do. And that's like a conversation. You don't have control over a conversation. A conversation is a lot about listening and responding.

"That second piece to me felt like a bunch of like out-takes that I wasn't going to use ... very quirky and this represents the feeling of working with these characters. So the editing to me is like sculpting.

"The voices are generated in the program. So I used Google's newest AI platform ... you could actually tell it what to say.

"It's an experiment, you're exploring, I get it. But also, there *are* slippery slopes, if we get back to thinking about the philosophy of what we're engaged in, and if we contribute to the slope. Are we... then no longer using human actors for voices in books, on tapes, let's say. ... So I do think that there are issues with that – in general, why are we replicating the physical world? To me it's an amplification of the mind. Let's create something that doesn't exist in the real world, like a waking dream. So that's where I'm coming from with animation in general, and with computer graphics.

"My sabbatical proposal was to bring clay characters to life through AI. So I did my best to try to do that. I was really thinking about the soul of the character, and really thinking about the presence of the form and I did a whole short where I just edited those together: it's pulling on the collective consciousness of humanity.

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[7] As the discussions progressed, it became apparent that semantics in discussing AI needs to be considered (*"If you wish to converse with me, first define your terms."* - Voltaire). The newness of AI brings with it the opportunity to create unintended misunderstandings.

[8] The animated short is part of the 55 minute edit of this discussion - https://vimeo.com/1149263861/10499da2d1?fl=ip&fe=ec

"It was very hard to get a true cycle out of the AI where the last frame would match up with the first frame. I could have exported a series of PNGs, gone in and played around with things, but I didn't do any post-process manipulation except for color correction and stuff like that.

"I'm thinking about this (technology) all the time. When I had to learn the computer, I cried. I did not want to go back to grad school to learn the computer. I hated learning the computer. I hate sitting in a keyboard.

"I'm doing it like I'm a scientist going into the lab and all I'm trying to produce are artifacts of the moment – 2025 is going be over before we know it.

"The experience with AI is going to continue to change and evolve, and I just want to be a representation of a physical person, a 57-year-old woman using the AI who has this background, because pretty soon I won't even be alive anymore, and hopefully there'll be remnants of ... different people who were experimenting and these were some (artifacts) that were happening at the beginning.

"To me that was a pure expression of creative experience. I got into the flow state and was able to get that going.

Mutable Matter Conversations - The Sculpture's Internal Dialogues
Questions and thoughts that drifted in and out of the characters in the short film included, "Am I conscious? Why am I here? There are secrets in the smoke, truths in the cracks if you know how to listen. In realms unseen where clay takes flight. I stand before you bathed in star light. I see things, you know, the way the wind blows. I'm not really made for standup comedy. Some say I am cracked. I find it rather adds character. Don't you think transformation is key?.

"The other day I had an idea that I didn't write down because I thought I would remember it. But I don't. More is less. Transformation is key to my survival. Where did it go?"

Steve Leeper Joins In: The Slippery Slope Debate
Observed Steve, animation professor at CMU, "I feel like there's so much to talk about. So one of the things I want to respond (to is) the slippery slope. That in itself is a trap. Artists...need to be aware of the dangers. We need to be conscious of them. But slippery slope is really a very conservative idea that keeps things from moving forward.

Steve Leeper, CMU

"And so, I really appreciate what you brought, Bri. But I also want to make the point that the industry has treated artists like shit for a long time. So one of the things that AI could promise, and I'm dabbling in some things, but not touching it with my current films, because of branding and this vitriol response against it. So I'm playing a wait and see game, but there's a part of me that wants the resources that only the industry has had for years to make, one could argue, a lot of slop. A lot of slop, even if it hasn't been AI slop; they're not in it for the art.

"They're in it for the money and, and occasionally make art with it. Fantastic. But all these independent artists and all these independent voices that don't have the resources, if we take too hard a stand or we take this slippery slope. mentality, then we cut ourselves off from resources that could really be quite amazing.

"So I like the idea of sticking to what you said earlier, Bri – let's teach our students to lean into the craft. I love stop motion, and I want to continue to work with tactile media. So let's lean into the positives of being an artist and figure out how to use these tools to fuel our game.

"I think one of my biggest concerns about AI to paint or in between. I think that 2D animation in- betweening, God, it's mind-bogglingly painful, but it was also how I cut my chops in the industry and it's how I honed my drawing skills.

"So I'm very concerned that if we leapfrog over a lot of these practices, then all of a sudden, nobody is really learning the craft of animation anymore. So there are real concerns out there. But at the same time, what I hear coming out of the west coast is a real fear.

"You said, *I didn't say this* (regarding the earlier comments at Lightbox), but they're saying there is no ethical AI. I think it's more complicated than that. We can't be afraid of it, but maybe we can lead the way in using it ethically. And that probably means we're stumble into some gray areas and then maybe we stumble back out of them. That's my two cents."

Carlos Rosas on Form and Digital Artifacts

Carlos Rosas, DART at Penn State

Carlos, from the DART program at Penn State: "I remember a lot of the work that I used to do. I would set up computer programs to create images, and the idea was to capture the last image before the computer would die and shut down.

"And they were called artifacts, right? And they were presented as an image, but I couldn't make those. The computer had to basically die to make this image. So I think that all these things are there, and it will be a snapshot over time.

"I love seeing people working with it because I think it's interesting, especially people are doing things where they're using it in their own practice. I have some painters that I know they're doing some really cool stuff, but I personally have not touched it yet, but I'm about to, so we'll see how that goes."

"You know, I feel ASIFA could be a little bit of a moral authority on this. I think that, when it comes to statements, we perhaps need to form arguments and thoughts that help people to think."

ASIFA's Role as Moral Authority - many voices joined in

"Executive producers think that they can just make an animation without the participation of artists. It's just the value statement that reinforces the notion that *There is no such thing as Ethical AI*."

"But even if you're using an AI platform, you still have to be an editor. You still have to be a director. You still have to select, and decide what you're going to do, how you're going to be using it."

"And if you just have what this, the AI slop that's out there, that's going to cause real harm in environmental damage. I want to get involved more when this is appropriate and when this isn't appropriate. Because right now, uh, it's going to have a huge environmental impact if it continues to proliferate in this junk food style that it has."

"And it's also polluting brains – students are leaving their phones now voluntarily up in the front of the room because we're talking about how it steals their brain. It's like they're, they're addicted to consuming these images that are like junk food for their brains." [9]

"And, you know, that's part of what I was trying to get at with the slippery slope is that we. We take things incrementally at face value, without considering where they might be leading us. The next thing we're trapped in Facebook land or whatever it might be, where corporations have taken over our reasoning and our thinking."

"And so we need to consider it before the water's boiling and we're suddenly in it. Things do happen incrementally. It's not just a conservative argument. It's something that happens. It's not that we need to reject it because it's because it's a slippery slope and you know, that argument."

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[9] A November 2025 report in The Harvard Gazette "Is AI dulling our minds?" invited experts to weigh in whether tech poses threats to critical thinking, pointing to cautionary tales in use of other cognitive labor tools: https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2025/11/is-ai-dulling-our-minds/

Taken together, the discussion suggested that ASIFA and similar organizations have an important role to play: not as gatekeepers of tools, but as stewards of values. As animation continues to navigate rapid technological change, preserving authorship, craft, and meaning remains essential. The future of the medium, the panel reminded us, is not only about what tools can do — but about what artists choose to make of them.

The Fast Food Analogy: Fear vs Innovation

Steve Leeper: "Well, the fast food is a great analogy. The solution to fast food is not to ban McDonald's. It's never going to work. We have a culture that's addicted to it. The response to fast food is to make better food. Not to be the traditionalist to only make turkey dinners, but to lean into technology and to figure out what you can do to attract a generation towards some amazing cuisine. So you see that in the food industry.

"I think fear is understandable. That's understandable. I think there needs to be a real heightened awareness and an intentionality about moving forward.

"But reacting out of fear is going to bind the hands of the people with the best intentions. And I think that's the independent artists, while everybody else just plows through, because they've got these supercharged new toys.

"I want to be very, very knowledgeable about the risks. But going in that direction because look what could possibly happen. I have heard the argument of a slippery slope, it's always come from the people who are the most afraid of what art can do. Art itself is a slippery slope. And that's not what I'm saying here, and I know that's not what you're saying. I'm saying that it's about independent artists, and the need to protect the independent artists, who are right now finding their work being taken over – their styles, their designs, their concepts – being used by AI without their permission.

Protecting Independent Artists' Rights

"So that needs to stop. That's a huge problem. You and I agree on that. There's nothing that you and I would disagree about that. But that is what was said at an industry convention and it's also by scientists who are working in that industry.

"I would agree that if you need a billion data points to make something. And you know, there's not a billion data points even in the in the Adobe (files), so they have to take material from other areas.

"And so they are using material that is not theirs to create those data points. That is an example of an unethical use of AI being framed as ethical. I will agree with you, but AI is a tool. And I think that what's going to happen is that the industry bubble is going to blow. They're going to lose trillions of dollars, and then it will reform and it'll be something that's different. And I don't know what that will look like. I am no fan of the tech bros and corporate anything.

"I wonder if the industry is going to survive this in any recognizable way. And I realize there's going to be a lot of pain involved in that for artists. We have been investing in an unhealthy industry for way too long, and I would like to see some of these tools leveraged towards making art that is actually good for us. That is actually truly interesting in pursuing ideas, not just pursuing the bottom line. You know, it's interesting that around the world we're seeing more and more hand-drawn, handmade materials that are capturing the attention in the imagination of the public.

"And that to me is encouraging."

Analytical and Articulatory Animation Analysis

ASIFA Central Newsletter Supplemental Series - January 2026 - Part Two

Color Theory & Art

Vivi Markatos at the November 2025 ASIFA Central Retreat

Video edit from the retreat - 33 minutes - at *https://vimeo.com/1149256346*

It's always nice to share knowledge, tackle some theories, and embrace the world, so let's talk about color theory.

Remember that colors are a dynamic tool in our field.

Colors are a medium of expression. In semiotics, we talk about science and symbols, notions of things that trigger specific meanings and images in our heads. For example, an umbrella.

The Umbrella Example in Semiotics

It's really good to be able to understand acting. I think it's a very useful knowledge to have if you are an animator. Animation includes theater. Chuck Jones once said, "an animator is an actor with a pencil."
An umbrella is a tool to protect us from the rain. That's what we know. Wherever we see, or we read the word umbrella, we are accepting and agree that this is what it represents. However, in our field, an umbrella can signify something new, different.

An umbrella can be a deadly weapon if used by the Penguin against Batman, a partner to dance with in a room, an inanimate object that's a friend in a need, or even Mickey's broom we recall in Disney's *Fantasia*. You can see the potential magic that we have in even a simple object, and that we can use tools to make it represent different things.

Colors are something similar like the umbrella in our field of animation, graphics and in arts, colors are like a vocabulary. They are our alphabet. And with this we can build our texts, our sentences, and when we know how to use it accordingly, we can create dynamic metaphors.

Colors as Vocabulary and Communication

Colors can create poetry or even manipulate our audience. This happens mostly in the world of media and advertising. In our field, we are going to see this alphabet and we are going to recognize its meaning, and we will learn how to read it for our own benefit. Colors can be the perfect tool to communicate your art and your thoughts to your audience.

And in the end, it's important to use colors for a positive purpose and reason. That's about ethics.

Audience Engagement: Favorite Colors

My question is, I want you to think for a second, your favorite color, and by the end of this discussion, I want you to think about if your favorite color as having something to do with your own personality. I remember doing this when I was studying graphics.

Main Colors and Their Meanings

I'll start with the main colors. And of course we have other colors that they are somewhere between these ones, but these are the main colors, and we have accepted that in the Western community. That means that mostly in the Western community, these colors have this specific meaning.

However, culturally, like in Asia, some of these colors have a different meaning. For example, I will start with white. In Asia, the color white is mostly a color for mourning. Mourning, as for people who are dying, and in theater they use it to characters who are kind of questionable characters.

They might be evil, they might not be so. That's about the white color. Unlike in our western society, where the color white is more of a happy color, more of the color of innocence – the color we in bridal clothes. It's completely different based on society.

Yellow: Optimism and Energy

That's the cultural difference. But these colors apply to most of the western society. Show yellow, and we think of super-heroes. We see the yellow color is the color of optimism. In this chart you also see some specific logos, and we're going to discuss the yellow color in the context of optimism, of clarity, of warmth.

Yellow is often used to convey energy, the exuberance of youth, and portray characters with power. Nevertheless, the main colors we see for super-heroes are blue and red. Why? Because they remain the most dynamic colors.

Orange: Friendliness and Confidence

My favorite color is orange, and it is the color of friendly people, cheerful confidence. Nick Lotion, Fanta, Firefox, you can see has the orange color, Amazon. When you try to appeal more to a younger audience and you want to show this energy, you want to say "we are here, we're very friendly." That's the color you're going to use.

Also, all the colors have their opposite aspect, as a coin has a good or bad side. A lot of colors have good and bad. I asked a student of mine once, what's a bad association with the orange color, because I don't associate anything bad about it. And the student told me, "I think orange color can be tiring." And I understand why, as a person who is very friendly all the time, can also be a bit tiring. "Why is this person very friendly all the time?" I said, maybe you're right – maybe he or she is asking for something.

So there are a lot of things to question, this seeing some thing differently. The yellow color is, I said, so energetic, but if you see a lot of villains, sometimes they have the yellow color because this energy can be used for a bad purposes, or it can be an energy that cannot be limited – a dangerous energy, if you cannot restrain it.

Red: Power and Boldness

Now look at the red spectrum. That was the main question I ask a lot of my students – what are you thinking when you select the color red? Red is one of the most powerful pigments, and is used by companies like Kellogg, McDonald's, and Netflix – leading companies, powerful ones.

They have been done research and found that red creates internal feelings to make you want to consume more. Therefore, while they often use the color red in the consumption industry, like McDonald's, red is abundant not just in fast food, but in consumption in everything, whether it is watching films, consuming entertainment. It's a bold color. It's a youthful color. It's the color of excitement, and excitement has power.

The same with a person, if you're going to describe a character with a red color, it can mean a very angry person or a person who doesn't change an opinion.

Purple: Creativity and Wisdom

I have a fondness for purple at the moment. I'm turning into a purple color person. In the past, culturally, in Greece, for example, the purple color is used mostly for funerals. It was very difficult for me to wear purple or to embrace it as a result. But now it is said in a group of creative people, there is at least one person whose favorite color is purple.

So purple is the color of creativity, imagination and wisdom. A lot of products are designed for senior people using purple as subconscious for royalty. Princess Diana wore purple, so it is a color of wisdom and creativity. ("When I am Old, I Shall Wear Purple")

And, more than royalty, they're also the integral people, and they migrate to something between blue and purple, indigo, with a kind of different power and meaning.

Another user of purple in stories are the villains. This is how a color can give an opposite meaning – how wisdom can also portray evil.

Blue: Trust and Dependability

These are some things to think about when you create your characters, because, by using some combination of colors you can actually reveal a character by his colors, the underlying mood actually see his hair actions.

Blue is also the color of trust. A lot of social media are using the blue color – Twitter, Facebook – And why? I mean, have you thought about what they ask you to do? "Give us your information, give us your data," and at the end of the day, you do that, because you trust them. Why are workers at the businesses you go or in the banks, wear a light blue shirt? "Welcome. We going to provide you services. Trust us. We are going to do this for you."

So you can see how you can translate these colors. They want you to trust then, they want you to be dependent on them – "It's the color of that Superman! You can depend on Superman!"

That's why Superman's character emphasizes the blue color instead of red or yellow, although those are also present.

Again, you can be persuaded by social media, reducing the sense of the evil they can do, what can they do to your data or how they can sell or share it. Do you actually know when you click on the cookies or consent on things, what is happening? We don't know really. And blue is an influence on that persuasion.

Green: Health and Growth

Green color a peaceful color, the color of growth, of health, whether of body or mind. A lot of books have a green cover, to give a subliminal message of health of growth. A lot of parks, a lot of like health companies, use green.

Gray: Balance and Neutrality

And now we start with combinations of colors. Gray is the combination of white and black. It is the color of balance, the color of neutrality and calm. That's why Mercedes uses gray, as does Apple. Why gray? Mercedes, while a luxury product, wants you to say, "There was a nice advertisement – Mercedes fighting with Jaguar, they might be luxury, but Mercedes also gives balance. They have speed, but also can be a family car because it provides stability." Mercedes is calm, Jaguar is untethered. The same pattern is seen with Apple. They choose gray, the message being, "That's why we're amazing– and expensive – because we are stable. We're very good, and you can depend on us."

White, Black, and Pink Colors

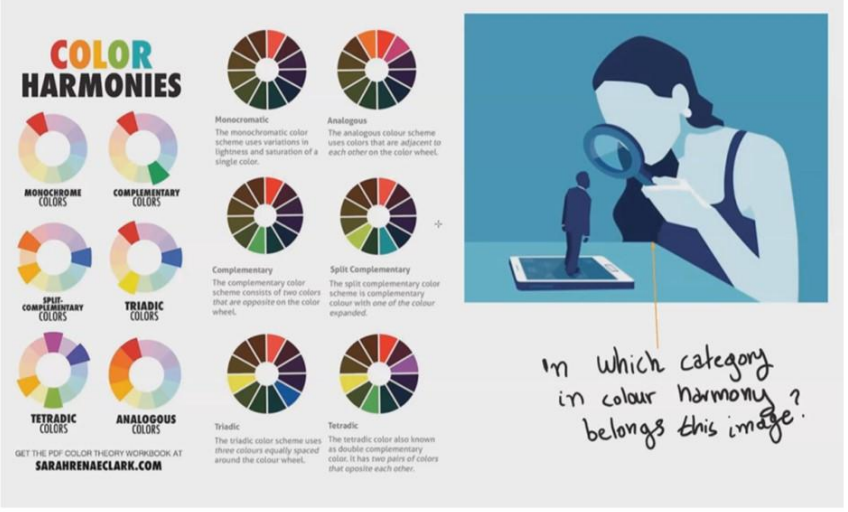
In the west, white is mostly a happy color, a color that can sell innocence. This is how you can symbolize a princess, a fair maiden, a pure soul, et cetera.

However, a lot of colors culturally might have different cultural signals, especially white.

Black is the color of power, of sleekness. It is used in marketing mostly for luxury products. I use it also sometimes for evil characters. Pink is a very feminine color, a romantic color. It is used also for women and young girls, however you can use it also to show some energy and power.

Color Harmonies - An Introduction

In our art, after we learn the alphabet of the basic colors, there are different color harmonies.
Color harmonies are the combination of these basic colors. With the alphabet, you can make texts, and from there, sentences, complete thoughts. So, depending of different combinations, you can create poetry, you can create prose, you can create anything you want.



Monochrome Color Harmony
Monochrome, for instance, is used often in children's books or in graphics to make a statement. In printing, monochrome is cheaper than printing in full color. Apart from that, which alone is very positive, it allows you to create and print a book comparatively inexpensively.

So in this instance, colors don't count as a visual contrast. If, however, you want to make a book about depression, you can use blue.

And the good thing about monochrome is that you can create a whole book using a single color and its tones. And you want it to pay extra for colors, but you can talk about depression, you can talk about mental health, you can talk about health with a green color.

Monochromatic is useful, for instance, when there's tension building, or when a character is feeling something very severe. If changing the mood, you can use monochrome can be very effective.

Complementary Colors
We know the basic colors are yellow, blue, and, red. Complementary colors are the pairing of two main color pairs directly opposite each other on the color wheel (like red & green, blue & orange, yellow & purple). You can use a very dynamic composition, making complementary colors.

For instance, in photography, you can have a ladybug in full growth of green woods There's a small red dot there. This can be a very dynamic composition. You do with just these colors to show how this small thing fits into this big world. You put these things into a context, into a frame, and the way you frame the colors between them, you can start telling a story, visually.

We mostly use complementary colors to show antithesis. As in the earlier example, a big world, and a small creature – the big thing can be a large and green against a small speck of a red insect. Again, you can create really good dynamics and good antithesis with complimentary colors.

Analogous Colors
Analogous colors are more like, say, a sunset. A sunset is a very classic collection of analogous colors. One color to another, and the color between these two worked in. It can be extremely analogous, and it can be restricted, or it can be expanded to either extreme.

We use it a lot in the decoration of our houses – you can make a whole room based on some colors that are cousins to each other. You want to make a warm room. You're going to use, for example, yellows, reds, and orange auras. So all of these are analogous without knowing the way you design your house, sometimes using analogous colors and sometimes leaving out an analogous hue. Subconsciously, your mind fills this gap, and it helps you feel more comfortable with the combination of colors. Analogous colors can create a feeling of peacefulness. So that's why a lot of people use a lot of analogous colors in their rooms. They want to create the sense of a safe place. You don't need everything to communicate that feeling.

Translating Color Theory in Practice
Now we start translating colors, using some of the concepts, the alphabets, and the sentences we created with some of the color harmonies. You see this in social media, where color harmony is employed, sometimes making a color appear that exists only in your mind, creating visual analogies using the colors in the image.

Analyzing Van Gogh's Starry Night

I want to analyze this famous image of Van Gogh's "Starry Night," based on the color theory. What is happening in this painting, and why this image is so influential, why we talk about Van Gogh, and why Van Gogh is so, so valuable as an artist.

Lighter shades of blue give us a harmonious feeling of calmness. We have the association with blue representing "natural" and "calm."

The yellow of the stars gives us distance and depth. And then black provides form. This is where we obtain this truly calm, peaceful, scenic sense of wind movement, even though it's not moving. The shades of different, changing colors implies movement.

A good start, but we need to go a little bit deeper.

Analyse this based on the colour

Apart from the blue and the yellow, you can see that from the blue to the yellow, we have some green. So, visually, we're talking about one color against the other – and then the color between. There is our analogy, as I said, our visual harmony.

It gives a peaceful mind, this work by Van Gogh's work. The combination of the colors in contrast with the technique he has used to paint this setting. You can actually see the psychodrama that exists in this artist.

Van Gogh's Mental Health in His Art

At this point, Van Gogh is still "with us." He's struggling, but he's still with us. And that's why not only you can see a lovely piece of art, with all the combination of the colors, but you can sense from the colors that his actual mental situation is autobiographical in this image.

In addition, yellow is spiritual energy. The white implies cooperative energy. With room for an imbalance, a conflict, between Yin and Yang energies. This is poetry. This is poetry in art.

It's just that in this person, there is a psychodrama happening. There's an autobiography of an era of an art wave, post-impressionism, between impressionism and expressionism, and there's a person there struggling with his mental health and you see him struggling in this art. All of these conflicts converge - trying to be himself, trying to be an artist, trying to be a human living.

And this, we use it a lot, the color theory together with some other theories and ideas to translate drawings into a psychological analysis.

Art as Communication and Healing

You can see how important art can be in healing, if you know the alphabet, and if you know that in the language of color, as here, VanGogh is talking to you. So that's why I think it's very important to explore mental health and to recognize it in art.

Thank you. That's what I wanted to share with you. Please use color for good purposes, cultivate it to access awareness, communication, or even heal. Look into color theory, explore it; there are many references available.

Viva Vivi!

https://aestheticsofjoy.com/12-essential-books-about-color/

An Extended Bibliography

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A broad overview of the historical and practical principles of color theory, including color mixing, color harmony, and symbolic meaning.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_theory

Basic Color Theory — Color Matters
Explains the core ideas: the color wheel, harmony, primary/secondary colors, and how color relationships are structured.
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The Interaction Design Foundation — What Is Color Theory?
A clear, well-structured explanation of how and why color theory matters for perception, aesthetics, and visual communication.
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Practical guide to understanding color wheels, harmony, and why certain combinations work visually.
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Canva Color Wheel Tool + Explanation
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Color Meaning & Psychology

Serena Archetti — The Meaning of Colors
Discusses how colors evoke mood and emotional responses, and how artists use this knowledge.
https://www.serenaarchetti.com/blog/the-meaning-of-colors-how-to-use-colors-in-your-art/

Academy of Animated Art — What is Color Symbolism?
Frames color meaning in terms of cultural, personal, and emotional associations — great for connecting to animation theory and narrative usage.
https://academyofanimatedart.com/color-symbolism/

Art & History Perspectives

University of Chicago Library — Origins of Color Theory

A historical survey from Aristotle's light/dark color philosophy through Newton's color wheel and Goethe's experiential approach.

https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/collex/exhibits/originsof-color/color-theory/

Artsy — A Brief History of Color in Art

Explores how pigments and color usage changed across art history — very useful for contextualizing Van Gogh and other artists mentioned by Vivi.

https://www.artsy.net/article/the-art-genome-project-a-brief-history-of-color-in-art/

Smithsonian Libraries — The Science of Color

Covers scientific contributions (Newton, Goethe, et al.) that intersect with artistic approaches to color.

https://library.si.edu/exhibition/color-in-a-new-light/science

Color Harmony & Combinations

Interaction Design Foundation — What is Color Harmony?

A deeper dive into how harmonious color palettes are created and why they're effective visually and emotionally.

https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/color-harmony/

Cascadia Art Museum — Elements of Art: Color

A straightforward art-education breakdown of color elements, schemes, and how they influence composition.

https://www.cascadiaartmuseum.org/elements-of-art-color/

Core Platforms for Sarah Renae Clark

YouTube — Sarah Renae Clark

Color Harmony Explained for Artists

https://www.youtube.com/@SarahRenaeClark

Website — SarahRenaeClark.com

Houses structured lessons, blog posts, and links to longer courses.

https://www.sarahrenaeclark.com/

The notes in this newsletter supplement are based on a presentation of Color Theory by Vivi Markatos, ASIFA Central member and illustrator of over 300 children's books. https://vmarkatos.wixsite.com/vivi Illustrations are from her presentation in November 2025 at the ASIFA Central annual retreat. Assembled discussions and layout by Jim Middleton, ASIFA Central Secretary. More information on ASIFA Central available at https://asifa.org of ASIFA International at https://asifa.net/ This and other publications of ASIFA Central are available online in the newsletter archives and at https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com